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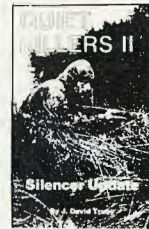
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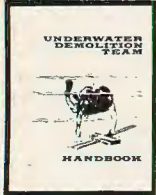
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JUNE, 1979

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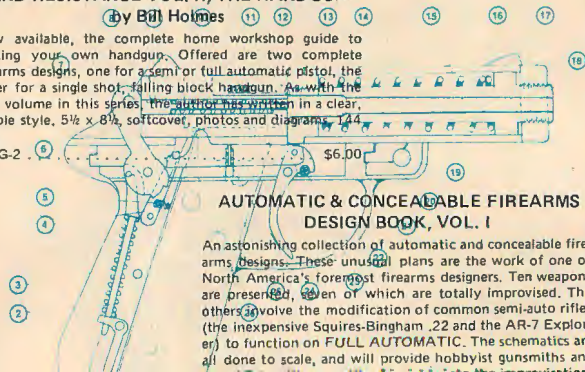
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An Illustrated History of the Conflict in Southeast Asia

By Bernard C. Nalty

Forward by

General William Westmoreland

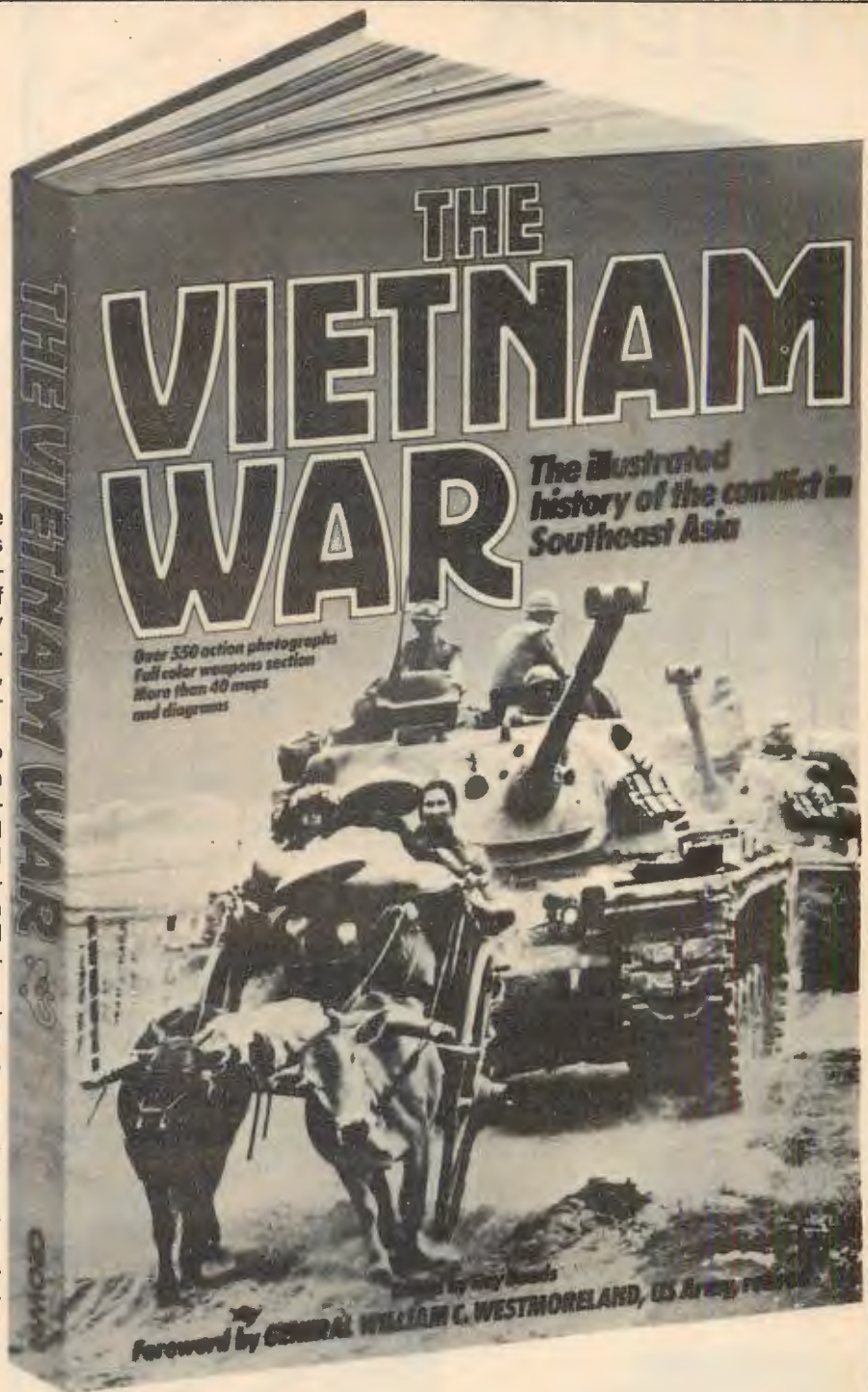
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# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE



COVER:

This issue represents another first for SOF — a full wrap-around cover. This still photo from footage of the motion picture, *Apocalypse Now*, is so good that the editors and Publisher Robert K. Brown thought the shot warranted unusual display. What they thought about the movie, you can find inside on page 56.

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## TAYLOR AT IPSC ...

SOF African correspondent Al J. Venter incorrectly reported in the January 1980 issue that Chuck Taylor, a member of the American Blue Team at the IPSC World Championships in South Africa, "threw away" his team medal.

What actually happened, according to Rocky Kemp, another SOF representative at the scene, was this:

"There was some unhappiness about certain incidents at the match, some bad calls by judges early on and some other things, including some of the tactics used by Raul Walters. There was even some talk about the American team boycotting the awards dinner but that was decided against — and Chuck was one of those advising against not showing up.

"After the dinner, when awards were handed out, Chuck remarked, 'These are really meaningless,' and asked if anybody wanted his.

"I said, 'Take it easy, Chuck. I'll hold on to yours and send it to you later.' That was it."

(Unfortunately, a report by Kemp arrived at SOF just after deadline.)

SOF apologizes to Taylor for the incorrect report.

## SF VET NEEDS INFO ...

Jack H. Simons, a member of the 5th Special Forces in Vietnam in '66-'67, needs information about a Long Range Patrol section that operated under his group. He needs to know the group's name, location, usual type of mission, special operations using LRP, etc.

Simons is working on a novel, using group members as his main characters. If you have any information, get in touch with him at R.R. No. 8, Columbia City, IN 46725.

## SAFARI CORRECTION ...

We printed an incorrect address for Safari Arms in our December 1979 Bulletin Board. The correct address is:

Safari Arms  
P.O. Box 23370  
Phoenix, AZ 85063

Their phone number is (602) 269-7283.

## GUN CONTROL REFORM? ...

Four U.S. Congressmen have introduced legislation amending the Gun Control Act of 1968 in an effort to reduce abuses of that piece of legislation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

The "Federal Firearms Law Reform Act of 1979" was introduced by Rep. Harold Volkmer (D-Mo.) and co-sponsored by Reps. John Ashbrook (R-Ohio), Michael L. Synar (D-Okla.) and James F. Sensenbrenner Jr. (R-Wisc.).

In his introductory remarks, Volkmer criticized BATF for innumerable violations of individual rights, attempts to trap innocent citizens into technical violations of the GCA '68 and cited a need for closer Congressional scrutiny of the agency.

He also accused the Bureau of lying to Congress during past investigations of BATF activities.

## ERRORS AND OMISSIONS ...

Nick Uhernik's pointed out two caption errors in his "Battle of Blood" (October '79). On page 41 we had him waiting in a MP jeep at Pershing Field. Our caption should have read, "MP shown searching vehicles entering and leaving Pershing Field for hidden bombs." As Uhernik says, readers who notice the red cross on the medic jeep in the picture will probably write. He also notes CP stands for city cop — not MP. After the FLAK he caught about Marine web gear in "Toughest Beat in the World" (August '79), he's understandably paranoid about caption lapses.

Also in October, we omitted the complete address of *The Law Enforcement Bible's* publishers. It's Stoeger Publishers, 55 Ruta Court, South Hackensack, NJ 07676. Phone: (201) 440-2700.

## ALLIED AIRBORNE ...

The Allied Airborne Association, 117 Milton Ave., Staten Island, NY 10306, announces its membership is open to former or present paratroopers, glider troops, glider pilots and copilots, pilots and crews of troop carrier units, air-assault and air-mobile men, helicopter pilots and crew, and attached ground personnel of these airborne units.

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sent airborne, air-assault, air-mobile and troop carrier servicemen and veterans of the U.S. and allied military forces. Dues are \$5 per year with over-seas air-mail dues \$8.

### WORLDWIDE SHORTWAVES ...

SOF reader Christopher G. Beehner of Sanford, Fla, reports readers with shortwave receivers have a world of adventure at their fingertips.

Rhodesia's extensive English language service can be heard from 0355-0445 hours GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) on 2425khz, from 0355 (0500 Sundays) to 0615 and from 1515 to 2200 GMT. On 5012khz, they operate from March to September, from 0545 to 1545 GMT, and on 6020khz from 0800-1400 GMT — winter only. They can be heard on 2336 from 0325 to 0430 weekdays and from 1700 to 2015 GMT. On 3306, they can be monitored from 0325 to 0630 GMT (weekdays) and from 1530-2015 GMT, 3306, 3396 and 5012khz providing the best reception due to higher power. Reception is best in winter months.

Uganda Broadcasting Corporation usually operates a North American service in English and French from 0300-0430 GMT (times variable). Now off the air, due to political turmoil, it may return at 6030 in the late afternoon.

Radio Moscow operates anti-American broadcasts in English to all parts of the world at any time of the day, often using as many as 15 frequencies.

Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty broadcast from various European sites to Iron Curtain countries — difficult to hear because of jamming by the Soviet Union.

Many communist countries operate espionage stations to send messages to agents abroad. Messages are read in code, usually numbers, but also phonetic letters (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, etc.), usually in groups of five.

Beehner declares, "I've heard them in English, Spanish, German, Italian and Czech. Try frequencies 3060, 3090, 4740, 5768, 6675,7532; 8065, 9325, 9450, 11535, 11620 and 14970khz from around 2200 to 0600 GMT."



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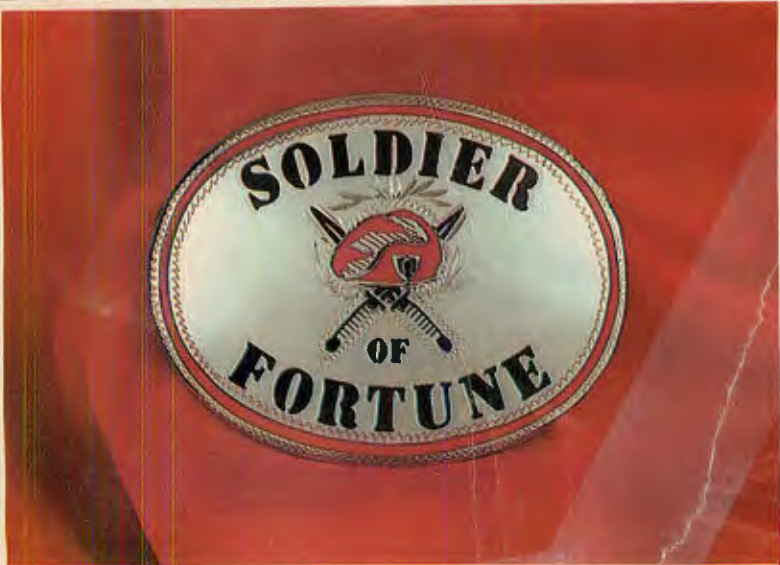
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## AMERICANS IN THE FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION

**J**ACK Hasey, formally known as John F. Hasey, was initially recruited into the French Foreign Legion at the Paris office of Colonel Charles Sweeny at 71 Rue Saint Dominique in August, 1939, and called to active duty on September 6. Due to the U.S. Neutrality Law, Hasey and other known Americans were discharged at the Legion camp outside Lyon a week later.

Hasey next joined the American Volunteer Ambulance Corps (AVAC) in France, and served with it until France collapsed from the German blitz. Hasey then made his way to England. He was the first American to join the Free French Foreign Legion — the 13th D.B.L.E. of Narvik fame. Commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant, he entered the Legion at Aldershot.

Hasey participated in campaigns in tropical Africa against Vichy French forces and in Italian Eritrea against Mussolini's soldiers, where his 40-man platoon captured 300 prisoners in its first action. One of his 12-man sections was entirely composed of Spanish civil war veterans. At the battle for Fort Victor Emmanuel and the city of Mas-sawa, Hasey's platoon captured another 300 Italian prisoners during the fighting.

On June 20, 1941, outside Damascus, Syria, while leading his platoon in the attack against Vichy French forces, Hasey was caught in the face, throat, chest and hand by a burst of enemy machine-gun fire, which cut his vocal cords, knocked out several teeth, shot away the roof of his mouth, and parts of his chin and jaw, which became unhinged. He continued the advance against the enemy — using his un-wounded hand to hold his jaw to his head, until he was led away to an aid station by his orderly. Hasey's Legion platoon successfully accomplished its mission despite heavy losses.

For his gallantry in action in Italian Eritrea and Syria, Hasey was personally decorated by General Georges Catroux with the Free French Order of Liberation and the Croix de Guerre with Palm, and was further recommended for the Cross of the Legion of Honor. John F. Hasey was the first American in the Free French Foreign Legion to shed blood in World War II.

—John S. Arvidson



# MERC: AMERICAN SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE

JAY MALLIN  
and ROBERT K. BROWN

**NEW!**

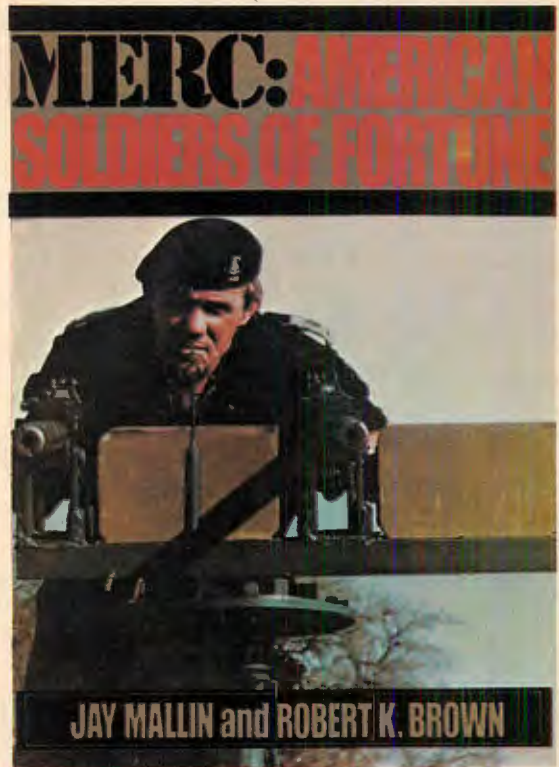
An eye-opening account of the lives, ideals, and adventures of today's soldiers of fortune.

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**JAY MALLIN** is a former *Time* correspondent and author of seven books on unconventional warfare and terrorism. **ROBERT K. BROWN** was a Special Forces team leader in Vietnam; he is presently the editor/publisher of the controversial magazine *Soldier of Fortune*.

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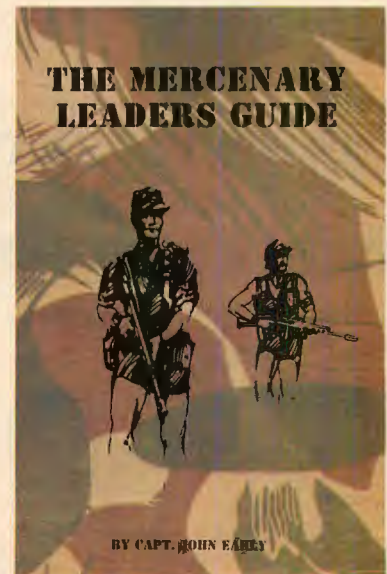
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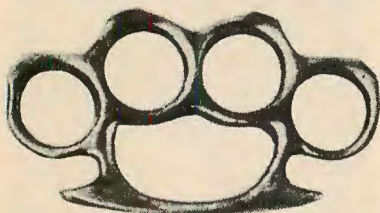
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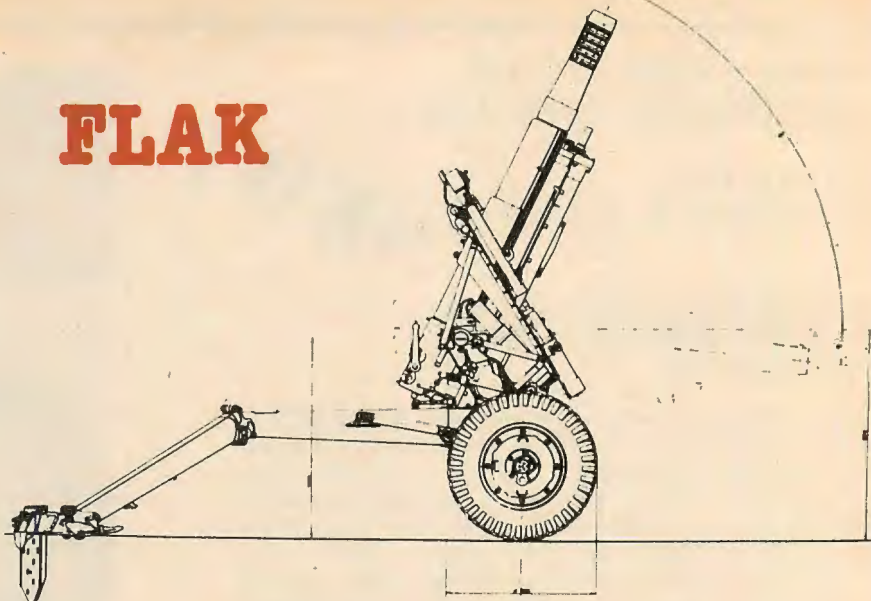
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**DEERHUNTER  
PRAISED ...**

Sirs:  
While I realize that you are not running a magazine of film criticism, I would like to comment on Tony Bliss's review of *The Deerhunter* (SOF, September '79). The movie suffers from occasionally heavy-handed use of symbolism in the midst of what are supposed to be realistic situations. This has unfortunately led some reviewers to see it as a simple apology for American actions in Vietnam. Tony Bliss, of course, did not.

I think the real power of the movie is the image of America and the American soldier in the war it presents, images that are still not accepted by society. Until now, the media have usually portrayed the Vietnam veteran as some kind of drug-crazed psychopath. *The Deerhunter* spoke out for the first time for the decent, ordinary people of this country who did not send their children to war to commit crimes against innocent people.

Further, it spoke for the vast majority of young men who accepted military service, not as a chance to rob and murder helpless women and children, but because they had been taught all their lives that, in war, it was their duty to put aside self and comfort and to fight for their country and its ideals. The tragedy of Vietnam is that these fine intentions were betrayed.

While *The Deerhunter* may lack realism, I welcome it as a reminder to people of the many lives touched and mangled by the war, lives that will not be the same again. Bravo, Michael Cimino!

Yours truly,  
L.E. Russell  
Brooklyn, New York

Thanks for your comments. You should also enjoy Tony Bliss's review of *Apocalypse Now* in this issue.—The Eds.

**MODEL INFO  
SOUGHT ...**

Sirs:  
SOF appeared on our newsstand here at Incirlik CDI, Turkey, at the beginning of 1979 and the guys here really eat it up.

One of my hobbies happens to be building scale model aircraft and military vehicles and with the information now available through your magazine, a whole new area of modeling has been brought to light. I am interested in building models, both aircraft and armor, of the types used in South Africa and Rhodesia. If you or any of your readers could supply me with any information, particularly photos or drawings of camouflage schemes and markings I would be more than happy to pay for reproduction costs, postage and handling.

Respectfully,  
S.Sgt. Joel K. Robinson  
241-80-4976 Det. 192  
PSC #1441  
APO, New York 09289

Can anyone out there help S.Sgt. Robinson?—The Eds.

**IOD SPYGLASS:  
CURRENT STATUS ...**

Sirs:  
Thanks for the outstanding article on IOD ("Spyglass Alpha," May '79). Status of program is as follows:

1. The equipment is in warehouses.
2. No provision for training as reflected by MOS chart, Marine Corps orders and bulletins.

If anything is being done, it's over at Marine Corps Development and Education Center, Quantico, Va., and they're not telling, unless you can get some shavetail lieutenant to brag about the Corps' nifty new secrets.

Personnel with IOD experience and/or training have their records reflecting the same. Only S-1 and the commandant knows who and they are not telling outsiders.

Benjamin K. Manuel  
Waipahu, Hawaii

## STOPPING POWER REVISITED ...

Sirs:

Every time a magazine needs a filler story, it finds some poor guy to pen an article about handgun stopping power (May '79). Chuck Taylor merely reiterates the Hatcher Gospel and joins the St. Cooper .45 ACP crusade. For me, a poor infidel, I must confess the Hatcher Gospel is old and should be buried where they found the Dead Sea Scrolls. A little research and Taylor may change his faith.

I would like him to read "Wound Ballistics" by the Army surgeon general published in 1962, some 58 years after the Thompson/LaGarde report. This book contains both experimental and clinical evaluations of wounding agents and concludes:

1. Kinetic energy, not momentum, in the agent doing the wounding. Velocity is the primary component of kinetic energy, something Lee Jurras showed in the early 1960s.

2. The bullet's yaw (spin around the long axis) is the actual entity causing a projectile to be retarded in tissue and to release its kinetic energy.

3. Proper bullet design can enhance the wounding effect.

Clinging to the Hatcher Gospel puts faith in false dogma. It is time for serious gun writers to stop rehashing old theories and do some creative thinking based on modern principles.

Sincerely,  
Gerard J. Piech  
Warren, Michigan

Chuck Taylor replies:

I've read "Wound Ballistics" and disagree with your conclusions and those you allege to be those of the United States Army.

First, that publication's data deals primarily with rifle projectiles rather than those fired from a handgun. To compare the two is like comparing grapefruit to pineapples. Moreover, wounding has little to do with stopping power.

Second, Lee Jurras shows only that light bullets, driven at high velocity, are more likely to upset than if driven at lower velocities or having heavier construction. Since HP or SP handgun bullets only expand about 50 percent of the time in humans, the point is somewhat moot.

Third, kinetic energy in handgun cartridges does not concern the matter at issue. It matters only once you bring velocity levels up to around 2,200-2,400 fps with a bullet of about 150 grains. Rifles, again.

Fourth, your "faith in false dogma" statement seems to indicate you place more faith in mathematics than in the evaluation of more than a century of

Continued on page 21

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## STEELE ON KNIVES

David Steele

### HIDEOUT KNIVES

**S**mall custom knives make excellent hideout knives for the police officer or protection-minded citizen. Since not everyone can afford these knives, they can instead acquire several new commercial boot knives. The Gerber Mark I and the Ninja are probably well known to readers.

Two very interesting boot knives are now made by Bench Mark (Dept. SOF, Box 998-B, Gastonia, NC 28052). These are the "Natchez" and the "Argonaut." The Natchez is a four-inch 440C single-edged knife with micarta handle and brass double-guard. The Argonaut is an underwater or bad-weather version of the Natchez with sawteeth on the back of the blade, stainless mounts, and a waterproof sheath. Both are well-designed factory knives that make use of the ideas developed by custom cutlers.



Custom fighting/concealment knife made by Mark Lahrman of Indianapolis, Ind. Knife has 440C stainless blade, micarta handle, stainless-steel mounts. Photo: Dan Fitzgerald

In choosing a concealment knife the purchaser should decide whether he will use it for utility or field sports as well as last-ditch defense. A utility or field boot knife should be single-edged with a substantial handle. The weapon-only knife can be of minimum size with stiletto blade and small handle.

Since a hideout knife will be carried close to the skin where perspiration becomes a problem, the blade should be stainless — 440C, 154CM, or nonferrous Stellite 6K. Mounts should be nickel silver or stainless steel. The handle should be all steel, aluminum, or micarta.

### SHEATHS

Most sheaths are made of leather and are meant to be carried on the belt or clip-

ped in the boot. Some sheaths use Velcro or stitching for attachment to the boot or inside the belt. The famous belt-buckle knife, such as that made by Bowen, fits into a flap behind the belt while the handle forms the buckle. Some knives, like those made by Pat Crawford, are light enough to pin upside down in the jacket lining.

One man had a piece of Velcro stitched under the arm of all his shirts so that when he dressed all he had to do was press the Velcro-backed sheath against it, then put on his jacket. The knife was suspended as in a crossdraw shoulder holster. Speaking of shoulder sheaths, I don't recommend them since with all the leather straps involved you might as well carry a gun.

Jerry Price (Dept. SOF, Box 782, Springdale, AR 72764) makes a hideaway dagger called the "Last Friend." Made of a single piece of 440C blued to cut down on reflection, the knife is curved to fit inside the waistband. The special sheath is made of Nylatron GS, Kydex, and polyethylene rather than traditional leather. It velcros out of sight inside a heavy belt.

One of the best places to conceal a knife is horizontally at the back of the belt. This can be done with Velcro or two loops can be stitched to the sheath so that it runs horizontally onto the belt. Dan Dennehy



Utility boot knife by Bob Lum (Dept. SOF, 602 E. Micheltorena, Santa Barbara, CA 93103). Has 154CM blade, stainless bolsters, choice of handle material (micarta, exotic wood or stag). Photo: Bob Lum

of Del Norte, Colo., uses the latter arrangement on his triangular boot daggers.

A forearm sheath can be devised with leather or elastic straps. A more comfortable arrangement is to velcro the sheath to the inside of a jacket sleeve. The "hook side" Velcro is stitched to the back of the sheath, then pressed against a "woolly"

piece of Velcro sewn into the sleeve (in the case of a boot knife, this woolly Velcro is epoxied into the boot).

Another good place is inside the right pocket of pants or jacket. The sheath should be pinned or velcroed inside so the knife can be drawn directly. This is a good way to walk down mugger-lined streets, with your hand inside your pocket on the handle of a knife. This method also works with pistols, but these may weigh down the pocket, creating an obvious bulge.

The object of a hideaway knife is self-defense. It is a deadly weapon, although defensive cuts to an opponent's extremities are not likely to be lethal. It should be displayed or used only when the owner is willing to go all the way in defending his life and physical integrity. My purpose is to instruct police officers and responsible citizens acting within the framework of local laws, not for the edification of teenage criminals who are already carrying a variety of straight razors, scissors, daggers, and pruning hooks on our streets and in our schools.

One man in Texas wrote me describing an incident in which he used a Ninja four-inch, Lexan-handled boot knife to defend himself. He was with his girl in a park late at night. Suddenly a youth armed with a derringer confronted them, demanding money. Knowing that there was nothing to prevent the youth from committing rape and murder as well as robbery, the Texan waited till the gun was pointed away for a moment, then drew the Ninja from the back of his belt. He slashed the hoodlum's gun hand, which caused him to pull his arm back. Without hesitation, knowing in another second the robber would be back on target, the Texan stabbed him till he fell. Then the man and his girl fled the park.



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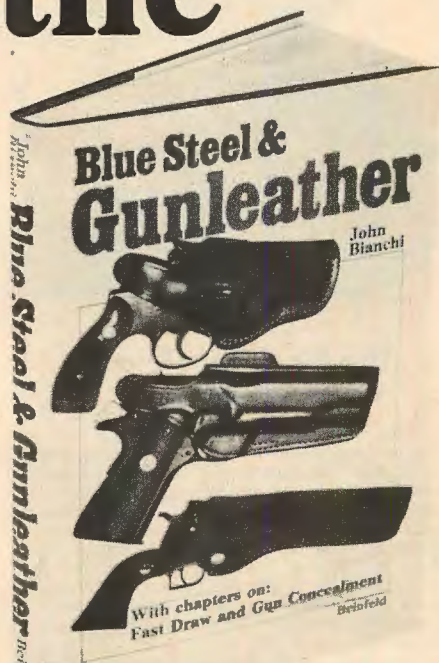
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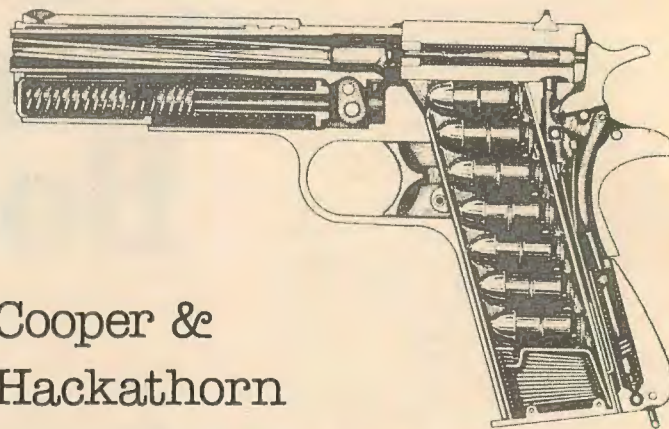


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# COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT



Jeff Cooper &  
Ken Hackathorn

*SOF's Combat Pistolcraft column welcomes letters from our readers. If you have a question or contribution, send it to Jeff Cooper, c/o SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. For a quick, personal reply, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.*

**Q.** As a private investigator I must often carry arms and I have long been a fan of the Colt .45 auto. I currently own a Combat Commander (all steel) and am considering adding another gun or two and some accessories. Would you kindly advise me on the following:

1. For a full-size combat-style weapon I am looking at a Colt Gold Cup, which seems to have all the features I want already on the gun except for extended slide release and safety. Your column seems to favor the Government, which is then customized with the accessories already on the Gold Cup. Will the Gold Cup be a good choice? I use 230-grain, standard-loaded FMJ bullets.

2. You seem to favor the lightweight Commander over the Combat. I have always believed that the all-steel construction of the Combat Commander makes it a more reliable, durable weapon. Yes or no? If not, I may as well take advantage of the lighter weight model.

3. Having only one magazine, I would like to add six to eight more. SOF carries advertisements selling them for \$5 to \$12.95, for what seems to be the same item. Is there a difference? Can you recommend a source for reliable, sturdy magazines?

D.W.L.  
Hinsdale, Illinois

**A.** We have generally found that the Government Model is a better buy than the Gold Cup because, while the latter does have some additional luxuries,

they must be modified in order to make the gun workable. For example, the Gold Cup comes with sights which can be seen, but they have to be dehorned before they are suitable for practical use.

The extended slide stop is a piece of foolishness. It is a tactical faux pas ever to shoot any semi-automatic pistol until it is empty. If you goof and find yourself with the slide back, there is no reason why the slide stop as issued will not serve to close the action. A great many gadgets are being marketed today simply to enhance a feeling of apartheid while providing no real advantages.

I have used one aluminum Commander since it was first introduced, back in the dark ages, and I have no evidence that it is less durable than the steel gun.

Replacement magazines are a problem at this time. I suggest you look carefully and remember — you generally get what you pay for.

**Q.** I have a FN M1906 pocket pistol in .25 AP caliber. It supposedly dates from around 1910. I replaced the pitted barrel by obtaining one from FN but they do not have any magazines left for this model. Where can I obtain some quality spare magazines for this nice little relic? When I shoot it with the standard Remington ammo, it throws the spent cases 15 feet or more. Is this normal or should I start looking for a new recoil spring? Do you know of anyone who makes wooden grips for this pistol? The stock grips are still in good shape but I would like to dress it up a bit.

**A.** The .25 caliber 1906 Browning of yours is not a "shooting" pistol. It's a "having" pistol. I don't know where you can get parts for it, and I really don't think you want them. Hang it on the wall and acquire a more useful weapon.



**Q.** Is Armoloy durable or do you recommend something else? I own a Colt Combat Commander in .45 ACP and am considering changing to combat-type adjustable rear sight and a higher front sight. What would you recommend?

I have done some reloading, using Unique powder and Hornady's 185-grain MJ SWC. I haven't had any feeding problems with this bullet and would like to use this more efficient bullet design for a defensive load. Taking into account bullet shape and the increase in velocity and decrease in momentum, can this load be counted on to achieve reliable stopping power and adequate penetration? What weight charge of Unique would you recommend for this defensive load? What powder charge of Unique would you recommend if I reload the 230-grain bullet?

I do not have access to equipment to measure velocity, etc. I have read conflicting opinions about the amount of velocity lost by using the Commander instead of the Government Model. What do you think? Is there a rule of thumb I can use when preparing reloads? Can you give me an idea of the velocity for the above loads, using the Combat Commander?

I also use a Charter Arms Undercover .38 Special with a two-inch barrel. What is the quality of this gun compared to competitive models? I do not reload for this gun yet and am presently using factory-loaded Remington 158-grain lead SWC.

Do you recommend a different commercial load if used for defense? (I know you frown upon the .38 snubbie, but occasionally it may be necessary.)

Taking into account long life, durability (or lack of it), etc., for the Undercover, would you recommend several handloads for it (using commercial bullets, please) for plinking, trail and defensive use? Do JSP bullets have any advantage over lead SWC when used in trail or defense loads? I have not yet bought dies for .38 Special. Do you recommend one brand over another (most of my equipment is RCBS)? What about roll crimp dies or taper crimp dies?

J.M.  
Forest, Mississippi

**A.** I have had good luck with Armoloy, though I have heard complaints from other people. Apparently a lot depends on who puts the finish on.

All of the service-type Colt automatics have unsatisfactory sights and must be equipped with higher sights which are easier to see. I currently favor the recessed BoMar as a rear installation, although there are several other good ones around.

I do not recommend reduced bullet weight in the .45 ACP cartridge since the balance of .45-inch diameter and 230 grains seems to be very well worked out. If you feel that you must go to a lighter bullet I would not drop the weight below 210 grains.

In general you can use 7½ grains of Unique as a maximum charge for the full-weight bullet and perhaps eight for a lightweight bullet. These are maximum loads and should be approached with caution.

I have examined a few Charters in various calibers and have not been impressed with the quality control demonstrated. It would seem that this organization is attempting to undersell Smith & Wesson, which already has all its equipment amortized. Something has to give.

I own one of the early Smith stainless M60s which is very strongly built. In this we use low-end .357 ammunition and up to now have seen no evidence of deterioration. I certainly do not recommend this as a general practice, but if you are stuck with a .38 Special and a two-inch barrel you have to do the best you can.

The homogeneous SWC configuration seems to give better consistency on impact than any form of soft point that I have examined.

RCBS equipment has been consistently satisfactory in my experience but I don't do a great deal of loading on my own so I do not consider myself an expert evaluator in this area. --Jeff Cooper

Continued on page 76

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# IN REVIEW

**FUNDAMENTALS OF MODERN POLICE IMPACT WEAPONS.** By Massad F. Ayoob. Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas. 1978. 158 pages, \$14.00. Review by David E. Steele.

**T**HIS is not a picture book of a martial artist doing his stuff. It is not a history of stick fighting as practiced in the Orient. It is a practical account of blunt instruments used in American police work, with an evaluation of the instruments themselves and the most popular schools of thought regarding their use.

The photographs illustrating the book are not particularly impressive. However, Ayoob's lucid prose gets his point across without detailed photography.

There is very little I could disagree with in the book. The author takes an eclectic, humane, legal and ethical attitude toward the use of weapons in police work, without becoming enmeshed in old style "kill-or-be-killed" military stick technique or complicated Oriental ritual.

There are a couple of things with which I must differ, however. Ayoob feels the PR-24 Prosecutor baton is substantially stronger than a conventional baton. While this may be the case, the PR-24 is far from unbreakable. I broke two of them in two months on a 30-lb. practice bag, no abuse or cold weather involved. The new aluminum PR-24 is a better bet for long practice sessions, reserving the plastic model for duty wear (California, among other states, forbids metal batons for law enforcement).

Another Ayoob idea I would have to disagree with is that systematic baton instruction began only after World War II with the introduction of Oriental martial-arts techniques. This is correct. LAPD, for example, used baton technique based on saber fencing prior to the adoption of the Koga method. Nineteenth-century pictures of NYPD nightstick practice also show the adaptation of fencing moves.

The author covers yawara sticks, police flashlights, sap gloves, buttsticks, blackjacks, billies, nunchaku and tonfa, as well as the conventional baton. His general conclusion is that the nunchaku is too dangerous for police work (with which I agree) and that the most effective sticks are the 24 to 26-inch Koga baton and the 24-inch PR-24. He feels that the hard-wood billy should be retired entirely, with which I must agree, but I wouldn't want

to be the one to try to convince the British and Commonwealth police to drop their 10-inch truncheons.

Ayoob includes an excellent section on potential injuries resulting from choke-outs and baton striking techniques. There is a great lesson here for those who wish to avoid lawsuits and criminal prosecution.

Finally, Ayoob and well-known instructor Arifur Lamb emphasize that the baton should be used against unarmed suspects only, that the sidearm be used to intimidate or kill anyone armed with a knife or bludgeon. A policeman is not required to duke it out with every violent suspect, especially one that outweighs him by 50 pounds or more. Likewise, there is a lesson here for civilians: a walking stick can be an admirable deterrent to unarmed assault, and if used with discretion against nonlethal targets (elbow, knee, stomach) will probably not involve its owner in an ADW charge.

Incidentally, a number of people have asked me when my own stick fighting book will be published. The fact is that it is being published, as a series of articles in *Soldier of Fortune*. Given that information, I would have to recommend **Fundamentals of Modern Police Impact Weapons** as the best thing published as a single volume.

*David E. Steele is well qualified to evaluate the use of blunt instruments in police work. As SOF's knife and police weapons editor he has often written about them (see "Blackjacks and Billies," SOF, Jan. '78, "Blackjacks and Batons," SOF, Apr. '79, and his police weapons column, SOF, May, July '79). The author of Secrets of Modern Knife Fighting (Dept. SOF, Phoenix Associates, Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306) is compiling his own book on stick fighting. Because of his work for the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, Steele's assessments come from practical application as well as training workouts.*

**DOUBLE EAGLE.** By Mr. X with Bruce E. Henderson and C.C. Cyr. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co. 227 pp. \$10.95. Review by David Pietrusza.

**D**EFACTORS, exiles, and emigres have of late been seeping out of Eastern Europe with some regularity. Solzhenitsyn, Bukhovskiy, Vins, Ros-tropovich, and Panov have emerged. One

of the odd things, of course, about their resistance, is not that they have been particularly downtrodden by the communist system — but in fact up to the time of their disillusionment been fairly prosperous.

Like them in their prosperity are the few secret police or intelligence agents that have hopped across the Iron Curtain. They too once supported — and were supported by — the system. However, when they made *their* break it was with even more profound danger. With them no such language as "anti-Soviet agitation" was used — "treason" was the only word employed to describe their activities.

Two years ago a defected KGB counter-intelligence officer, Alexei Myagkov, gave us *Inside The KGB*, a look at Gulag from the other end of the gunbarrel. Now Mr. X (frankly, I do not know why he hides behind this melodramatic pseudonym, as his old bosses will surely know who he is) provides us with a fascinating portrait of life inside one of the satellites and in their intelligence services.

John Barron's *KGB* noted the unpublicized importance of the satellites' spy groups. X, who was a lieutenant colonel in the Polish secret service (UB), coordinated Polish espionage in Scandinavia and acted as head of the Department of Poles Living Abroad before becoming a double agent for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

**Double Eagle** is autobiographical in nature and traces X's life from its beginning. In fact, his recounting of his experiences as a teenager loose in the streets of war-torn Warsaw — hustling, stealing, smuggling supplies into and Jews out of the walled ghetto — makes for riveting and revealing reading.

The tragic nature of that era served to warp his judgement: "I can only say that I could never envision anything more horrible or terrible. I saw hundreds and hundreds of dead people on the streets." He wished to serve Poland, to see it rise up and form a new and just society — and he believed the communists when they said they were the ones to accomplish this.

But also guiding X was the sense of power he felt as a Party member, being able to lord it over his university professors. In fact, his party status made it possible for him to be a student in the first place. When he was tapped for the UB he had little inclination to decline.

While X is in no sense a religious man, he nevertheless has some interesting comments to make regarding the pervading influence of Catholicism on Polish society. Among X's fellow neophyte spies — handpicked, supposedly fanatical communists — individuals would occasionally and abruptly announce that they were *still* believing Catholics.

Obviously, they were quickly packed off and so was any other agent exposed to the contagion of Western ideas. While *all* intelligence services are more than slightly paranoid, the tests of purity in the Soviet bloc are particularly rigid:

"The slightest suspicion of questionable conduct or connection with the West," X comments, "could disqualify the best candidate. It was enough, for instance, to have a relative who was a priest. It was enough for a member of one's family to be in touch by letter with a friend from high school or primary school who was in the West, even if they haven't seen each other in 20 years."

Considering her relatively small size, Poland's intelligence program is formidable and part of the reason for this is the sizable number of those of Polish extraction living abroad — 12 million by some estimates. While the great majority are of course anti-communist, there are enough about so that at least a few can be found who will collaborate with the Warsaw regime. Not always is the choice voluntary:

"When a person has 90 percent of his family in Poland," says the author, "you can almost always find a way to blackmail him. It takes time and knowledge but it can be done." And concurrently there are so many Poles abroad that it is comparatively easy to slip an agent into their midst.

There are as well opportunities for propaganda or for sowing dissension. One operation X was involved in concerned the publication of an emigre magazine, *Nasz Znak* in Sweden. It professed to be anti-communist, but its main task was to discredit various exile leaders: "Through this magazine, we broke the Polish immigrant movement in the West into a score or more of different groups, all fighting among themselves," notes X, who served as the surreptitious co-editor of it.

Later, as director of the Department of Poles Living Abroad, he coordinated the activities of such fronts as the Polonia Association and the Union of Former Combatants. "Indeed, it can be said," he notes, making a bombshell of a charge, "without understatement that Polish diplomatic missions exist principally to monitor and exploit the local Polish community, for purposes of communist subversion and espionage." They check on all prominent Poles within their area; for example, in the Chicago consulate all personnel — save two commercial specialists — were UB agents.

He also reports on the large scale theft of passports, social security cards and driver's licenses from thousands of unsuspecting Western visitors to Poland, when these documents are left at hotel desks and police stations. They are later used by infiltrating agents.

X covers a large variety of subjects including the recruitment of agents, the assassination of suspected turncoats, and the turmoil that swept Poland during the riots of 1956 that led to the installation of the Gomulka regime. It is a fascinating glimpse at life within a totalitarian espionage establishment.

*David Pietrusza is a contributing editor of The New American Review and an associate of the New Guard Magazine. His articles and book reviews have appeared in several national publications, including National Review, Conservative Digest and SOF.*

**SHOOTING AND HUNTING ACCESSORIES.** Edited by Swanson Custon Firearms, Dept. SOF, 1051 Broadway, Denver, CO 80203. 1979. 682 pages, profusely illustrated. \$5.00. Review by Eugene A. Barron.

**N**OT since the days of the "old" Stoenner catalogs has there been produced what is essentially a catalog of catalogs, covering the many accessory items necessary to those who shoot and hunt. Swanson's, a leading Denver firearms and accessories shop, has done just that.

Their catalog covers, for example, knives of more than a dozen different manufacturers in 76 pages. Handloaders will find a complete listing of components and equipment and gun owners a wide variety of parts and an extensive listing of leather goods, both holsters and slings. The catalog lists magazines for weapons, grips, and a complete line of police supplies.

The black powder shooter can find a thorough rundown on supplies, one of the few places where such a list exists. For those buying factory ammunition, index numbers are shown along with prices, extremely helpful in making sure the proper type is purchased. The profusion of sights and sight parts in Swanson's catalog has been unavailable to me for years from any other medium.

I found some oversights, of course, as might be expected in any initial effort. The watch section lists only Timex. However, from body armor through clothing to cannon and tomahawks, this is an excellent effort and a worthwhile investment for those, like this reviewer, who would like to know the competing lines available in various shooting accessories either before visiting a store or sending away for direct-mail orders. There are two indices, one on the back cover listing major accessory categories, and a more com-

plete index naming various brands in the last few pages.

*Eugene A. Barron, SOF's new business manager, is a longtime weapons collector and shooter, whose book reviews have appeared in SOF (see Blue Steel and Gunleather, September '79, Gun Digest 1980, December '79).*



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# I WAS THERE

by Emery F. Lessard II

*Emery F. Lessard II was a Marine PFC, MOS ammo technician, who served at a naval ammo magazine area at Cubi Point, Subic Bay, in the Philippines in 1973-74.*

*As he tells it:*

**Y**OU probably remember hearing back in the spring of '74 about the three Seabee officers who were killed by Philippine communists while inspecting a newly-built road. Well, I was there. And too close for comfort.

It was a hot day and I was supervising two Filipinos loading 155s into a magazine. I was leaning against the mag.'s cement wall. Suddenly I heard loud pops of gunfire and then the cement above my head began to shower down on me in small flakes and there were smacking, pinging noises all around me.

I yelled to the Filipinos to get into the mag. and close the steel doors. Being unarmed, I ducked in with them. We closed the door and waited. The shooting didn't last very long.

After finishing my work, I headed back to the office. I turned in the key and told the C.O. what had happened.

He stared, saying, "You lucky son-of-a-bitch!" He told me about the three Seabees being killed.

I turned three shades of white and almost spilled hot coffee on my crotch.

The road where the Seabees were killed was less than 100 yards from where I had been working. They were unarmed and had stopped their jeep for a moment to check something in the road. When the commies opened up on them with at least five different kinds of weapons, they didn't know I was there. The shots that hit around the mag. were strays.

Next week all of us ammo techs toted .45s with full clips when we went to work.

The communists were never caught.



**I**F you have a combat or adventure story for "It Happened to Me" or "I Was There," triple-space type it and send it to SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306, Att: M.L. Jones. All stories should be 500 words or less. Upon publication, SOF will become owner of all publication rights. Submitted articles are subject to editing and revision, although their content and theme will not be changed. Photos are also helpful. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope so we can notify you of acceptance or return of your story. Article payment is \$50, upon publication. All entrants will receive an SOF patch.

# IT HAPPENED TO ME

by J.F. Reynolds

*J.F. Reynolds of Maitland, Fla., is a 13,000-hour pilot. He had extensive combat experience in World War II, flying for the RAF and later U.S. Army Air Corps. In Korea he was flying a new U.S. Air Force F-86 Sabre Jet when he battled with a MiG-15 above the Yalu River one November afternoon in 1951.*

*As he tells it:*

**E**NCLOSED in the metal and plexiglass of my cockpit, I rode a roaring fountain of fire straight up into a pale afternoon sky. In front of me a slim, raked-wing MiG-15 raced toward the stratosphere.

Individual combat to the death — whether it involves fang and claw in the mud or fighter aircraft in the sky — requires relentless concentration. The MiG was pulling away from me. Our fight hadn't been long but I was almost out of ammunition. He had not yet had a chance to fire back but if he succeeded he would probably kill me.

My speed was falling off. I could stall out at any second. Then I'd be through. I'd have to lower the nose. Try to regain flying speed. Abandon the chase or risk falling off into a spin.

It would give my adversary the respite he needed. He could regain the initiative, come about and kill me with blazing cannon.

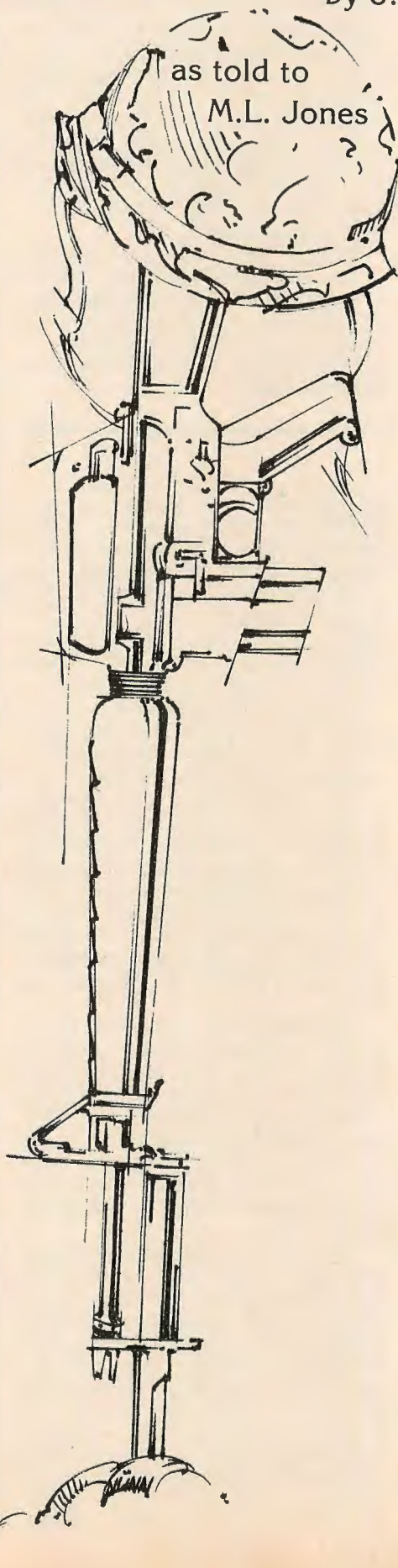
I had to chance one last burst from my guns. Flying ever so carefully, trying to maintain a featherlight touch on the controls, I began to line up the slim gray shape in the reticule image of my computing gunsight. My airspeed had disappeared. A single uncoordinated movement and I'd literally fall out of the sky. I could hold the MiG in my sights for only an instant. Range was critical; the Sabre was now trembling in a stall. I squeezed the trigger.

Not a short burst as I'd been taught but a do-or-die sustained hosing. Almost immediately the .50s went silent. I was out of ammo.

The gray shape ahead of me started to tumble over sideways. Pieces disengaged themselves in sequence from the parent body. The MiG and I had both stalled out and now we were falling backward and rotating around each other.

As I tried to get some airspeed back on the clock, the enemy passed me going down. He seemed to be slowly disintegrating. I looked around the sky to make sure I was alone, then watched the broken bird through its death fall. Its pilot did not get out.

I shook my head like an animal. I was low on fuel, out of ammunition and suddenly tired.



# FLAK



Continued from page 11

observed effects obtained in actual combat by thousands of men. I, for one, intend to continue to place my faith in what actually happens when people are hit with real bullets.

Last, since no one has come up with a more accurate educated guess about the issue of stopping power than Hatcher, I will continue to place my faith in his observations until something better is proven. His observations closely correspond with my own experiences in the field. I have had occasion to shoot three men with a handgun. I know what happens when people are shot.

## SOF FOR BOY SCOUTS ...

Sirs:

Reading SOF makes me laugh. All you do is show some kind of adventure-playground for adult boy scouts in a sickeningly computerized world, giving an uncritical, immature attitude toward the severe conflicts in today's world. This becomes especially clear when one compares your reports of actions in Rhodesia with the annual reports of Amnesty International.

Instead of demonstrating a serious code of honor for chivalrous fighting — as in the North African Theater between Rommel's and Monty's armies during World War II, for example — you stress the book of dirty tricks and even join in Hitler's white-master-race song. To you, colored people are second-class, no matter how justified their cause may be or how courageous their fight. This is proved by articles like "First Yank SOF in Rhodesia" (May '79), typically narrow-minded, imperialistic stuff without any relation to the historical fact of the defensive actions of Africans against an arrogant European invasion.

Modern-day heroes are people of the Amnesty International kind. Such humanitarians need an independently operating "unit" that shares most of their goals, a "unit" willing to use force, yet restricted by a chivalrous code of behavior.

I see the moral chance of an SOF there — otherwise he will be nothing but a dumb, basically-criminal, abused and exploited gorilla, who'll get his ass shot off or worse, working for some power-starved maniac or pressure group whose sole existence is an insult to any decent human being. A modern-day SOF has to think — and feel — a lot before pulling the trigger.

Kind regards,

J. Weber

Kirchheim-Teck, West Germany

Continued on page 82

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# TERRAIN & SITUATION

Jerry Ahern

**A**RMAMENT Systems Products Unlimited is marketing one of the more interesting defensive tools to come along in edged weaponry for some time. Called the "Deadringer," and only available to qualified law enforcement personnel and bona fide collectors, the Deadringer is reminiscent of the Booth knuckle knife profiled here quite some time ago. The Deadringer, however, is an actual knife, like a diminutive push dagger.

The Deadringer is put onto the second finger of the hand just like a ring, either with the blade pointed out and away from the knuckles for thrusting or the blade toward the palm for more subtle applications. Double-edged, the blade is a 1-5/8-inch-long spear point. Of high-quality steel with a matte finish, it would be non-reflective and highly effective in close-quarters darkness.

Retail cost for the finely made little knife is \$25. And for the collector, it makes the perfect curiosity. For someone in a potentially rough situation where mini-weapons are required, it could be a lifesaver. Complete with a sturdy pocket sheath of good-quality heavy leather, law enforcement types could easily conceal it almost anywhere. For more information, write A.S.P., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 18595, Atlanta, GA 30326 U.S.A.

**O**NE of the big complaints about the Model 59 Smith & Wesson 9mm auto has always been the grips. When Smith designed the double-column version of the double-action Model 39, they considered grip circumference of utmost importance. To achieve it they ruled out checkered walnut stocks like the original Model 39s. To keep the circumference down, the grips would have to have been too thin for proper durability. So, they elected to use high-impact-resistant, checkered black plastic. However good or bad the gun is, with the factory original grips it looks like a licorice stick.

Pachmayr, of course, makes their excellent, checkered-rubber, wrap-around grips for the Model 59, but for the person desiring wood grips and willing to take the handle's added circumference, there were none to be found.

But now there are high-quality, yet affordably priced, wood grips for the 59 — the Galef Monte Carlos. Of Philippine mahogany, the grips offer a smooth surface with attractive grain patterns. Wood-to-metal fit is excellent, the grips fitting as well as those from the factory. And the added circumference is negligible — just enough to make the wood panels sufficiently thick.



Lawman Leather's all-black Marauder version of the Dirty Harry Holster conceals Government Model quite well. Readjust harness, remove excess leather at connection. Bulky leather could be dead giveaway.

I've been using a pair of the Monte Carlos for the last several months on my 59 and like the feel they give the gun, not to mention what they do in the looks department. They lend a certain richness that the all-black gun truly needs. And access to the magazine catch release button is not impeded.

For those who generally abhor plastic grips — like me — the Monte Carlos are the best alternative around. Cost per pair is \$17. The Monte Carlos are also offered for most popular revolvers in several styles and for automatics like the Browning High Power, Smith's Model 39, Colt .45 autos, etc. Mine came from good friend Bob Kull at Junction Arms & Ammo, a Monte Carlo distributor. For more information, write Bob at Dept. SOF, 5141 W. 79th St., Burbank, IL 60459, U.S.A.

**J**ERRY Ardolino, owner of Lawman Leather, the people with the "Dirty Harry" holsters for the Model 29 Smith & Wesson and other guns of varying frame sizes, is now offering "The Marauder." It looks just like the Dirty Harry rig, except it is black.

Black holsters for shoulder use have a checkered reputation. They tend to sweat. This is mostly caused by the dyeing taking place after the leather has been processed. But the Lawman Leather holster is vat-dyed — the leather is black before the



holster is cut, treated, finished or anything else, so the likelihood of dye sweating onto clothing, etc., is remote.

But what is important is that there has been a definite need for a black shoulder rig capable of handling the larger handguns. SWAT team use, covert military operations, etc., frequently depend on low visibility. A light-colored holster can betray its wearer's presence or improve his definition as a target. This problem is compounded even more when the light-colored holster is worn over dark clothes and with other dark-colored or camouflaged equipment.

Though for anything beyond casual concealment, the Marauder and the Dirty Harry may be on the large side, this new black rig — because of color and rugged construction — is perfect for the night-work crowd.

Like the Dirty Harry holster, the Marauder is fully lined and even the lining is black suede. The Lawman Leather harness is excellent for carrying a heavy gun since its "Y" shape keeps the gun's weight transferred through the harness off the neck. On the off-gun side, the Marauder and Dirty Harry secure to the trouser belt and the innovative person could easily rig a knife sheath here.

My Marauder rig was chosen for the Government Model .45, a gun frequently

used in applications where low visibility is important, and heavy enough that a solid rig is needed to keep it secure under conditions of extreme exertion. To get the gun, grab the butt and break the frame forward through the spring closure, or just withdraw through the top of the open front rig, though the former method is more reliable.

Jerry Ardolino's Marauder rig is available for all popular guns, from N-Frame Smiths to Walther PPK/S pis-

tols, including new guns like the Mamba 9mm and the Rogak P-18. Price of the Marauder is the same as the Dirty Harry model with russet finish. For a color catalog and current price list, send \$2.00 to Lawman Leather Goods, P.O. Box 447, Katy, TX 77450. Jerry Ardolino sells a quality rig and anyone trying it, especially for big guns, won't be disappointed.

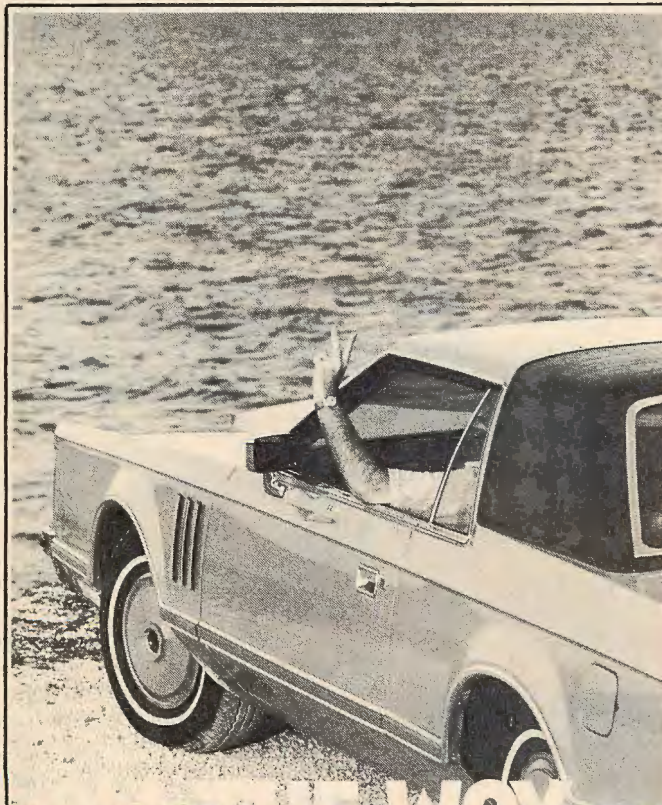


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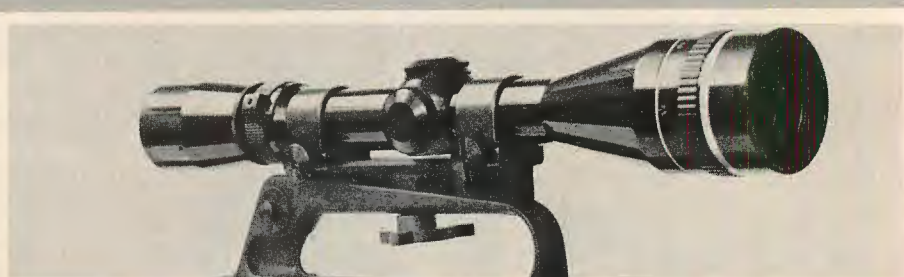
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Ever considered moving to another land? The author, who has lived abroad and travelled in nearly 100 countries, gives you the facts you need to know before incurring the formidable expense and effort of emigrating. He even explores yachting as a means of survival and a way to see and live all over the world.

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Mr. Schneider is also the author of another unusual book, **MASTERS OF LEGALIZED CONFUSION AND THEIR PUPPETS** (65,000 copies in print!), an undisputed eye-opener written without compromise. Now BOTH books can be obtained for only \$9.90 POST-PAID. And for each additional set ordered, you pay just \$7.90 extra—\$2 OFF (a 20% saving)! Books can also be sent direct to your friends at no additional cost with your compliments! Prompt shipment guaranteed.

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# SOLE SURVIVOR

## Dieter Dengler—The Reason Why

by Jeffrey M. Ryan

**T**HERE is just so much that can be put between the covers of a true book; some questions always remain, either unwittingly or by author's design, for the reader to answer.

In the case of Dieter Dengler's *Escape From Laos*, the salient question must be answered by the reader himself: what is there about this man, that allowed him to survive and ultimately triumph, where so many others failed?

Men by the millions have been prisoners of war, but few attempt to escape, and fewer still succeed.

In 1966, Dengler, a "Skyraider" pilot on board the Aircraft Carrier U.S.S. *Ranger*, survived a devastating crash, torture, five months' brutal and debilitating captivity in Laos, to escape. Then, in a desperate marathon lasting 23 days, he outwitted and evaded both the Pathet Lao and the Viet Cong to gain his freedom. Subsequently, Hubert Humphrey, the vice-president, decorated him with the Navy Cross.

Dengler provides some clues to unravel the riddle. The book outlines, in cursory fashion, his early life in a war-pulverized Germany and the suffering inflicted on himself and his family. His instinct for survival was awakened there, in scurrying about piles of garbage with his two brothers and mother — his father, a *Wehrmacht Feldwebel*, had been killed in the tank battle at Kursk — scrounging for food in order to keep ahead of the Russian juggernaut.

These skills were further honed in this country, when as an immigrant, barely conversant in English, he was under the misapprehension that his status as a U.S. Air Force enlisted man was *carte blanche* into a fighter aircraft's cockpit.

His keen interest in flying first was aroused while watching Allied pilots strafe railroad rolling-stock in his hometown in Germany. He instantly cultivated an appreciation not only of the pilots' dash and daring, but also of the more practical consequences of air power.

After separation from the Air Force in 1961, Dengler moved to the San Francisco peninsula, where I first met him. He im-

mediately established a reputation among his new friends as a resourceful and irrepressible madcap, but also as a brilliant student. His dedication to aviation was almost maniacal. And this, too, may provide a clue; an essential seriousness belied a personality almost Italian in its vibrancy.

He lived in a dilapidated Volkswagen panel truck, complete with boxes of dirt, in which he grew vegetables for food. His permanent address at that time was the student parking lot at nearby San Mateo College, where he enrolled. In the industrious manner characteristic of the



Dieter Dengler today, now San Francisco resident and commercial airlines pilot. For his exploits in Laos he was awarded Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Purple Heart — and Navy Cross, nation's second highest decoration for heroism.

stereotyped German, he oftentimes juggled three or four part-time jobs with his studies. Once he even staked out gold-mining claims in the Sierra, hoping to strike it rich. (He didn't.)

Such resourcefulness was accompanied by a pride that would not permit ac-

ceptance of an offer of a cash handout. One rather wishes some of the native born would follow his example. And while "study" for so many of his fellow students at the junior college meant a lark at a superannuated high school, Dengler was in deadly earnest. He managed to secure his degree under conditions that can only be described as the academic counterpart of an escape from Laos. This is an important point: he never expected favors, and was totally self-reliant. He was essentially alone, without any family, thousands of miles from his native country.

He was, and is, a true Renaissance man; he can do anything. He was an expert skier, judo enthusiast and surfer, even when the latter two fads were just getting started in California. His metal sculpture is in demand in local art galleries. Animated, and occasionally volatile in conversation, he has a hyperactive mentality, one with an enormous sweep, and with an unnerving grasp of detail: he is a hard man to contradict.

Let me give an example of his ingenuity. Once, a drunk ran him off the road, causing him to roll his VW, his only real possession. While he was unconscious, the vehicle was towed to a junkyard by a marauding, predatory tow truck operator, without permission, as a total loss. Never one to admit defeat easily, the penniless, wronged and never-say-die Dengler led the way in a midnight raid over a 10-foot-high chain-link fence topped with barbed wire — having previously dealt with the guard dog.

Then the former tool-and-die maker, the German craftsman, the mechanic *extraordinaire*, repaired enough damage to have us on the road in short order. Naturally, I ripped my pants on this escapade and constantly advocated caution, but *Die Katze* (his nickname to his German friends — "the Cat") ordered me to disregard this calamity, and to place my feet on the dashboard, and we crashed through the gate in a manner that would have gladdened the heart of Burt Reynolds.

Thus it is clear that Dengler matri-culated in the School of Experience, but,

differently than most, he apparently absorbed the lessons. The foregoing account, I hope, provides some insight, but it is insufficient as anything other than a partial explanation. By the time we drove to Alameda Naval Air Station in order for Dengler to formally join the NAVCAD program, he was as thoroughly Americanized as he could be — in the eyes, at least, of his future hosts. To suggest then, that Dengler succeeded because he has had so much experience in survival is an oversimplification; what he endured before his Southeast Asia tour was mere inconvenience, compared to that ordeal.

The book gives some other hints. Somewhere along the way, Dengler read the *Code of Conduct*, and did not understand it to invite discussion on the merits of relative ethics. He treated it as an absolute, especially the part about keeping faith with one's fellow prisoners. I think the reason why he so fully comprehended its content is because it is a simple reflection of the way he has lived his life; he has had inculcated in him from birth a fundamental appreciation of right and wrong. The concept of "Honor" does not need to be taught to some.

So, the reader can conclude that he is a supremely resourceful, highly motivated, exceptionally bright, uncompromisingly decent and alert man.

Dengler is one of those true — and rare — gentlemen (and I am confident that readers of this publication join me in wishing there were more) who feel that his country's interests are best served by moderate amplitude on patriotic issues.

But it is regrettable that those who criticize this Republic can not hear what being an "American" means to Dengler. So many take citizenship for granted: Dengler earned his, and does not treat it lightly.

On only a few occasions have I heard him address himself to this country's critics.

Once, during the Vietnam era, a hippie girl tried to humiliate him at a cocktail party he attended in uniform. His rebuttal was stirring, but the chastised maiden, reduced to a quivering piece of protoplasm, did have the fortitude, at least, to admit that she might be mistaken, thereby demonstrating rather more character than some movie actresses.

Still, we have but a partial explanation; everyone who has ever taken basic military courses in survival, escape and evasion, has heard of the downed pilot, who was discovered to be dead, and yet to have lit 20 cigarettes, with 20 matches, but never tried to build a signal fire. Many just give up.

So, how was Dengler able to cultivate, and then to sustain such a will to live? In the final analysis, I don't know, although I have known him for years and have read his book with interest. I do not think anybody else knows either.

The reader will have to guess the answer himself. Thus the essential riddle remains a riddle. One is left with the suspicion that some humans are just superior.

Incidentally, for those who may be curious to know how Dengler fared at the Navy's escape and evasion training course, the answer is: technically, he never graduated! Although the story does not appear in the book, Dengler never completed the course, because he kept escaping.

I do not mean he just escaped from confinement, he escaped — twice — from the entire naval installation. Once, he called in to the Shore Patrol to pick him up at a saloon, where he was enjoying hamburgers and beer, having escaped by getting the drop on his guard and commandeering his uniform, then sauntering out the gate.

He has in his possession a letter of commendation from the Secretary of the Navy, acknowledging this feat.

**Escape from Laos** is well written, suggesting that the former Air Force EM did indeed master English. Earlier I told how Dengler thought he could be a pilot as an enlisted man, because he did not understand what the recruiter told him. The Navy, to its enduring credit, made no such error. And this is consistent with what I know of him: I've never known him to make the same mistake twice. This time he knew what he was doing.

As a testament to courage, the volume is unsurpassed, and Dengler tells it all without rancor, and not without a little humor; the reader will live the excitement and laugh with him, as Dengler turns the tables, stalks the Viet Cong, who are stalking him.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jeffrey M. Ryan, 38, has known Dieter Dengler since 1961, when they were introduced by a mutual friend. They apparently cemented the friendship with a bit of hell-raising in old San Francisco. In fact, Ryan took Dengler off to the Navy recruiting station, which eventually led to his dramatic escape. After Dengler's ordeal, Ryan, a professional writer, helped with the original manuscript in 1969. Publication was refused at the time since public opinion was allegedly not ready for it. Ryan is an old army brat, but spent his own service in downtown Frisco as an undercover agent with the Air Force OSI. These experiences form the nucleus of a novel exposing the hippy-generation of the late '60s that Ryan is currently working on. He recently took time out from writing to pass the California bar exam.

— S. Nielsen

No human being can face the rigors of war and emerge the identical person who went in. Although one of the great features of the book is the straightforward narrative style, latent therein is a good deal of cathartic character evolution. Dengler admits to himself that some compromise — hitherto unthinkable — will improve his chances of success.

Thus he concludes that he should choose as an escape companion, Duane Martin, an Air Force helicopter pilot (who did not survive) whose personality would contrast favorably with Dengler's own — and his admitted occasional "impetuosity." Martin was the more cautious of the two, and, as Dengler notes, in their initial evasions to avoid capture, Martin's was the more enviable record. Together, they made a formidable team, combining both caution and daring. This is yet another example of a man who does not just think, but knows *how* to think.

It is incredible that, set down in such an alien environment, Dengler did so well. To paraphrase a great coach, "It's their ballgame, in their ballpark and we must play by their rules." But, as Dengler has often remarked to the writer, "The jungle is neutral."

So, when one really thinks about it, it's not their ballpark, and it's not their ballgame either, and, for that matter, to hell with their rules — Dengler did not accept their premises and rules or treat them as they expected him to. Rather, he treated them as artificial, not absolute, barriers.

The great lesson that we have all been taught by this man is that if one will take the time, and expend the effort, to reason with the intelligence God gave him, one can prevail, and emerge unsoiled.

The story makes clear that survival, escape and evasion manuals (**Escape from Laos** is one, too) are not written by some gnome in the Pentagon, designed to be just something else with which to harass the troops, but are Holy Writ, to be honored in the observance, and to be treasured. Dengler mastered his, and improved upon it. As Dengler makes crystal clear, meticulous planning, a thorough attention to detail, and a seizing of initiative — which, once gained was never relinquished — kept the Pathet Lao off guard. Dengler, because he is smart and alert, took advantage of their weakness, both as men, and as products of their own culture. Our press is fond of portraying communists as Machiavellian supermen, who never make mistakes. It's not true: they do. Dengler shows how a man can succeed — if he keeps his head and stays alert — and, most of all, will not surrender himself to the feckless.

As the Pathet Lao, the Viet Cong, communists in general, never tire of telling us, we know little of them, their aspirations and resolve. Perhaps this is true, but, as Dengler's book tells, they know far less about us — at least some of us.

# POW'S EPIC ESCAPE

## A Review of Dieter Dengler's Escape From Laos

by Bob Poos

**ESCAPE FROM LAOS.** By Dieter Dengler. San Rafael, Calif.: Presidio Press. 211 pages, maps, one illustration. \$10.95. Review by Bob Poos.

I have never read nor heard such an incredible tale of endurance of frightful physical suffering and survival in the face of overwhelming odds told in such a matter-of-fact, almost offhand, manner as that related by this man.

Dengler's unusual background and personality are related elsewhere in this issue of SOF and I won't go into them other than to say they were the key factors responsible for Lt. Dengler's being the sole American flier to escape from a Southeast Asian prison camp after being shot down and captured.

The bare facts are that Dengler was dropped by Laotian communist Pathet Lao anti-aircraft gunners on his very first mission from the carrier *Ranger* after it had been shifted from Dixie Station (South Vietnam and the South China Sea) to Yankee Station (North Vietnam and the Gulf of Tonkin). He didn't parachute from the plane but elected to ride it down — a remarkable act of courage in itself. Unhurt, despite his aircraft's shearing off some treetops which turned it into a twisted mass of unrecognizable wreckage, Dengler tried to elude the Pathet Lao search parties after him and for a time he succeeded. But ultimately he found himself staring into the muzzle of an old MI Garand rifle wielded by a mean-looking communist soldier.

Then the nightmare began. His captors forced Dengler to run headlong through the jungle as they moved deeper into the Laotian interior. At times he was plastered with leeches which could be removed only by scraping them off with a stick. They left bloody sores that refused to heal. Fire ants, huge mosquitoes and other insects added to the American's misery.

Then came the prison camp and five months of unpredictable punishments by vicious guards, fevered malarial attacks, scant — and barely edible — food, beatings and humiliation. There was even

petty bickering among the prisoners — two other Americans, one an Air Force helicopter pilot, and four Asians, all contract fliers for Air America.

Here is Dengler's description of Par Kung Prison Camp: "The prison itself was 21 steps by 22 steps. There was a little hut to the left of the one to which I was being led and two more huts built at right angles to each other. The opening into my hut was covered with a crude set of wooden bars that posed as a door. A center piece, some three inches in diameter, ran from the ground to the roof and to it were nailed five crosspieces spaced at six-inch intervals. This crude door was buttressed by a long crossbar, suspended from two rattan loops."

Dengler was soon to learn the treatment he could expect from his captors: "The guard entered the compound, carrying a heavy wooden block. It was about three feet long, four inches wide and nine inches high, with an oval hole chiseled in its center. The guard grabbed one of my feet and began pulling it toward the block. I broke free, realizing the wooden block looked like the stocks the British used for public punishment. 'You ain't gonna get me in there, you bastard,' I yelled at him in English. He let go and climbed back outside to get his carbine. He came back and pointed the carbine at me. 'Better put it on,' came the warning from Duane [another American] or he's gonna shoot you in the leg... just put it on. We all have to. If you don't, he'll shoot you in the leg.'"

The prisoners were soon transferred to another prison camp in which conditions were even worse. Dengler describes Hoi Het: "Now it was only one meal a day and we knew it would be reduced to less in time. We wondered if it wouldn't be wise to go into our stash of rice but decided against it, as that would have meant forfeiting our chance of escape.

"The guards were also getting smaller and smaller rations. The less food they had, the meaner they became. They had taken to firing at us when we went down to the hole [latrine]. They wanted us to die

because every bite we ate meant that much less for them. We were aware they had murder on their minds, so we began to crap only in the containers, using our evening run to the hole for emptying the containers in order to reduce our exposure. But the privilege of the evening run to the crappers was, like all our privileges, gradually eliminated. Soon it was no water, no toilet, and no going outside. But the worst thing was that we were kept in newly made large stocks. We had to sit in one place all day, cuffed to each other, sweltering in the mosquito-ridden heat and gagging from the fumes of our shit."

The others, particularly the Asians, were not as eager as Dengler to risk escape and possible death from their outraged captors or simply from exposure in the jungle. But such treatment and Dengler's constant urging induced them to make a plan and a desperate one it was:

"At about 4:00 p.m. we took our footblocks off. We sat around, waiting for the word to come from Thani and Y.C. in the other hut. Thani again kept the watch, relating what he saw to Y.C., who would then call out in a hushed voice to Duane who was stationed at the door of our hut.

"'Guards entering kitchen,' Y.C. called. 'Guards entering kitchen,' Duane repeated.

"'Don't have weapons,' Y.C. informed Duane who repeated it.

"'Great,' I whispered to our group. 'We'll have them. It's on.'

"'Y.C. mumbled something. 'What did he say?' we asked.

"'All in the kitchen, but one's missing!' Duane said.

"'I knew if we were ever going to go, we had to go now. 'Hell, let's go. He's probably not back from the village, yet,' I said. Gene, Phisit, and Procet agreed. Duane said it was okay and called back, 'It's on.'..."

"There was no fear now. Like a cat, I jumped up to the porch of the guards' hut and made my way across it, the bamboo poles squeaking uneasily at my every step as I let myself in through the side entrance. There were two Chinese weapons leaning against the wall. Then I spotted an American M-1 in the far corner. I looked out through the front entrance of the hut and realized I was standing in full view of the kitchen, about a hundred feet away. I jerked myself back against the wall, and when no one was looking, I jumped across the open doorway to the M-1 on the other side. I heard Duane's name called, the signal for him to leave the hut and join Procet and Phisit. I grabbed a full ammunition belt and ran across the hut and out onto the porch. Without stopping, I tossed the two Chinese rifles toward Procet and Phisit, then jumped to the ground, checking my M-1 to make sure it was loaded.

"So far, everything was working as planned and even going faster than we had anticipated. Less than a minute had passed. Phisit, Procet, and Gene were already in position and Duane was running toward the two Thais. I ran after and past Gene and he quickly followed me to the bamboo cluster, where we waited for a few seconds.

"A noise on the other side of the compound indicated that Phisit and Procet were moving out of their hiding place. I ran out from the cluster as Gene took off for the second guards' hut to get the Thompson submachine gun and to cover me from the side door. The kitchen was in full view now and I yelled, 'Yute, yute!'

"The world turned over before my shout had stopped echoing. We had expected the guards to be so surprised by the attack that they would just sit there, stunned, and let us take over without a fight. But just before my shout, they all started to run toward me. They must have seen Procet and Phisit on the other side just before I yelled. They had gone about 15 feet when a shot rang out and I felt the air swish past my head. I hadn't expected any of them to have a rifle and the near miss seemed unreal. I then realized that it had to be the missing guard. Our plan to take the place over without firing a shot had gone right down the drain.

"Screaming and yelling filled the air. Someone was shooting wildly in my direction, and I wondered what had happened to the other guys, especially Gene, who was supposed to be covering me from the hut. I seemed to be all alone, out in the open.

"Only three feet away, Moron was coming on at a full gallop, his machete cocked high over his head. I fired from the hip point-blank into him. The force of the blast hung him in the air, his machete still raised, and then spun him backwards to the ground. There was blood gushing from a huge hole in his back. I stood over him with my mouth wide open, amazed that a single slug could do such damage and mindful of nothing but the horrible-looking back.

"Screams and shots snapped me back to reality. I spun around just in time to see Nook trying to outflank me. 'Damn you, Gene! Where the hell is everybody?' I yelled into the air as I fired at Nook. The bullet hit him in the side and he collapsed, still yelling at the top of his lungs. I shot again to finish him off, but he kept on yelling.

"The guards were running every which way now and I opened up at the fleeting forms. I saw one man drop, and then everything became a confused blur. I reloaded my M-1 and through it all still heard screaming. Out of the corner of my eye I saw someone trying to get into the jungle. I aimed from the shoulder and fired. The man dropped, then rose, holding one arm. It was Sot! I fired round after round at him, but he was already

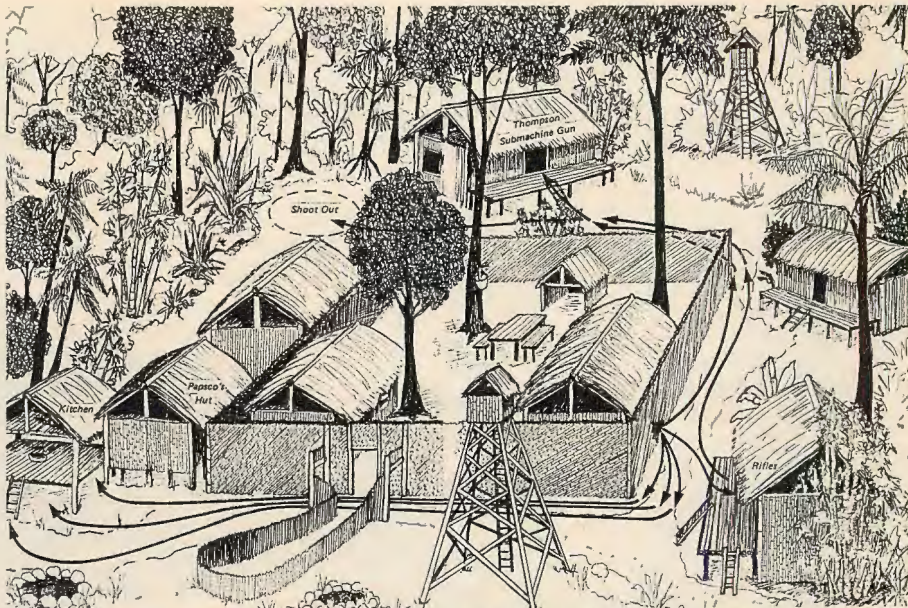


Illustration shows routes taken by Dengler and others during prison break and shootout. Dengler was only prisoner to fire his weapon, killing two guards and wounding one.

gone. Then suddenly, everything was eerily quiet.

"Duane came running to me, carrying a gun and yelling, 'The clip, the clip, it keeps falling out!'

'You're pushing the clip release instead of the safety,' I yelled at him. His face was snow-white.

'Everything's going wrong!' he screamed. 'I got Papsco's carbine but he wasn't in the hut.'

"Sot had gotten away, and God knows where Papsco and the Old Man were. That meant at least two, maybe three men had gotten away. I had a sudden paranoid vision of one of the guards looking down the sights of his rifle at me. I started running and shouting, 'Let's get moving!'

"I could hardly believe it when I realized that Nook was still alive and groaning. I aimed at him and pulled the trigger but the gun didn't go off. For a moment I stood there stupidly, and then realized the chamber was empty. I left him and ran around the corner of the fence toward the entrance to the compound, which was our prearranged meeting place in case of a change in plans. Duane came running toward me.

"Where in the hell are the rucksacks?' I yelled

"In the hut!' he hollered.

"Get them, I'll get the mosquito nets!'"

What followed was a 23-day ordeal for Dengler and Duane Martin. The latter was killed by Laotian villagers just the day before Air Force Lt. Co Eugene Dietrick of the First Air Commando Squadron based at Pleiku spotted Dengler and sent a message to the Air Force's "Jolly Green Giants" helicopter rescue unit, which picked up the escaped POW.

One of the Asians, a Thai, was believed to have been recaptured and later freed when a Royal Laotian Army unit raided the prison camp. He is believed to be alive



Dieter Dengler immediately after rescue following five-month imprisonment by communist Pathet Lao and harrowing 23-day flight after killing some of his captors and escaping.

at home in Thailand. The rest were never heard from again.

Dengler's experiences in prison camp closely resemble those of Correspondent Grant Wolfkill who was captured by the Pathet Lao a few years earlier. Wolfkill was released after a lengthy imprisonment.

Dengler was awarded the Navy Cross, the nation's second highest decoration for heroism, addressed Congress and was a nationally acclaimed hero.

Today he is a pilot for TWA, based in San Francisco.

His book is a testimonial to human courage, endurance and the will to survive. I recommend it to SOF readers without qualification.

Continued on page 78



Vann the pilot: three days before fatal crash in '72. Photo: UPI, Ennio Lacobucci. INSERT: Vann the man: bow tie and MAC 10.



# VIETNAM VISIONARY

## John Paul Vann, Part 2

by J. David Truby

**W**HEN Lt. Col. John Vann returned to the United States from Vietnam in 1963, he continued to speak out against U.S. military policies in 'Nam. Told to "get with the program, now!" he resigned on the spot. History — on his side — showed his opinions to be facts and the Pentagon turned to him for advice. He was invited to speak at West Point, the Air Force Academy, the War College, with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at the State Department, and even with President Lyndon B. Johnson.

But Vann didn't stay out of Vietnam or action very long. Someone in Washington liked what he saw and heard of John Vann and hired him for the Agency for International Development (AID) within the State Department. So, John Vann, a free-form war critic and politician-poisoner, joined the diplomats as a civilian advisor, working in the pacification program for the Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS).

**"At CORDS, we're the original 'hearts-and-minds' people."**

Officially, Vann's assignment with CORDS was to stabilize and pacify the civilian population and the political situation within his province.

"We were the advisers who saw to the civilian engineering," Vann explained. "We saw to it there was food available for distribution, we provided medical facilities, irrigation, seed, plants, tractors, machinery. In short, we were there to provide the civilian needs that arise during a military conflict." Joking with friends in Washington in 1971, Vann added, "We are the original 'hearts-and-minds' people."

But when it came to caring for the needs of the Vietnamese people, John Vann wasn't joking. He personally took the food, the medicine and the technical experts into the fields, the paddies and the hamlets.

"But I always tried to make sure our Vietnamese assistants were the visible ones

who actually gave out the goodies and did the things that benefitted the people. That's valuable exposure for the government, to be seen doing good things," Vann explained.

When Vann came back to Vietnam in 1965 with CORDS, many of his old pals said he'd been "sheep-dipped" to CIA operations. One officer who knew and liked him chuckled as he said, "Old Johnny traded his Army-issue Mickey Mouse watch in for one of those ritzy CIA presentation model Rolex watches with the red and black bezels."

**"Vann's wearing a CIA Rolex now."**

After all, while CORDS was nominally under the control of the Agency for International Development, it was also well known as a very welcome cover for CIA ops in Vietnam. A case in point is William Colby. He was one of CORDS' better known directors while running the Phoenix program.

In Vietnam, in the middle '60s, our brightest young adventurers were drawn to men like John Vann. Thinkers and cowboys alike wanted to serve with him. In a very positive sense he was The Man in Vietnam by 1968. His CIA contacts supplied him with armed helicopters and armed aides. They had those magic CIA "Get Out Of Jail Free" cards which made for operational *carte blanche*.

**"I put the accelerator to the floor as they let loose with their AK-47s."**

Vann hadn't been in-country as a civilian advisor three days before he got bloodied. Behind the wheel of his bright yellow pickup truck which was roaring full throttle down one of Hau Nghia Province's rutted roads, Vann spotted five VC hiding just off the road near the woods.

"I put that accelerator about through the floor and ducked down just as they let loose with their AK-47s," Vann related. "It was a little hairy, flying blind with all that ordnance pounding into the truck."

Swerving from rut to rut and nearing 70 mph, Vann's pickup crashed quickly out of range, but not out of damage.

"I counted 21 holes in her, all the glass was shot out, and I had about a dozen cuts from the flying glass," Vann said calmly, recalling that day he first "dropped in" on a remote ARVN outpost, shocking the troops and their American advisors with his shot-to-hell truck and blood running off his face and neck.

"That was some first impression to make on behalf of AID," he joked.

John Vann didn't like to rely on other people's influence or support. For example, already an excellent fixed-wing pilot, he learned to fly a helicopter, then earned his wings so he could do his own recon work again.

"Finding a good chopper pilot is a damn nuisance I can do without. Now, I can fly the son-of-a-bitch myself," he told friends.

Whatever his real job and for whom-

ever he was really working, John Vann soon won the respect of honest, sincere Vietnamese and Americans. For example, in 1966, he discovered that U.S. money for rural civilian food and medicine was being rerouted to feed the Swiss bank accounts of Vietnamese government officials. Vann raised royal hell, sparing no one. Yet, until his story hit the American press, neither the U.S. nor Vietnamese raised a finger to help. Forced by Vann's blast of publicity, arrest and repayment were finally ordered.

Despite his ranking position, Vann refused to spend his time in the secure areas that administrative positions entitled him to occupy. He was an action man, in the field, directing operations and solving problems. If he truly was the CIA's man, he was their greatest asset. He flew his own helicopter or drove his own jeep to remote outposts and villages to be with the people whose lives were on the line — the troops and the peasants.

Peter Arnett remembered, "He always liked to go to Vietnamese units that were on the brink of breaking and running. He was a master at bringing back their spirits and he always left them a big dose of his own courage and pride. He always got them to stand and fight because he had a lot of courage and pride to go around."

**"All that matters is winning."**

One thing Vann liked about his civilian assignment was that it put him even closer to battle than he'd been as a military commander. Of the 800-plus AID officials in Vietnam, less than 75 lived or worked in the provinces. John Vann lived the closest to the action, of course.

"When I arrived, about two-thirds of the population and territory in Hau Nghia was under VC control. That part of the Mekong was real bad-news country, I'll tell you," Vann commented.

And, tell 'em, he did. Less than an hour's drive from Saigon, Vann would lead his own convoys through the bad-news countryside to bring his expert and critical views in from the field.

"Civilian — military, it doesn't matter to me. All that matters is winning," is how Vann explained his unique power in Vietnam. Of course, he did have some powerful backup — the CIA in Washington and his own reputation in Vietnam.

Vann told his staff, "If you want these people's respect you have to earn it by living and working with them. You can't just bop out from Saigon every week. You gotta live with them, eat with them, work with them, and take the same daily risks. Respect is far better in the long run than fear."

Practicing his own teaching, Vann and his top assistant Douglas Ramsey moved into a small bungalow in Bao Trai, the provincial capital. Cocky, colorful and unafraid, Vann was not stupid, though. He fortified their home with sandbags and a few machine guns.

"But our best insurance was the fact

## CORDS

WHEN first coined in 1969, CORDS stood for Civil Operations Revolutionary Development Support, but some of the PR people in Saigon had a martini fit over the word "revolutionary." The name was changed to Civil Operations Rural Development Support. By 1971, the operation was in full bureaucracy, a joint effort of the military and the Agency for International Development (AID).

Personnel for CORDS included people on detached service from the CIA, Foreign Service, State Department, U.S. Information Agency, Department of Agriculture, etc. Most observers stress that CORDS was *not* a CIA front, although some Agency operatives in Vietnam did use it for cover.

CORDS was engaged in virtually every aspect of the Pacification Program, including refugee operations, resettlement, medical support and public safety, among others. Critics say that far too much emphasis was placed on programs in the urban areas and not in the rural countryside where much more help was needed.

Critics also claim that CORDS was the home of the Phoenix program. However, Phoenix was essentially a Vietnamese show, directed by the Minister of the Interior. Few old hands will deny, of course, that there was under-the-table help from both the CIA and CORDS in the Phoenix operation. However, the primary American role in Phoenix was strictly advisory, although both Robert Komer and William Colby did have a hand in designing the concept.

But there were plus factors in CORDS, too. For example, on all province and district advisory teams of Americans, if the top man was military, his deputy was CORDS, and vice versa. This was official recognition that a successful counterinsurgency program requires a joint military/civilian effort. There were also some outstanding people working within CORDS to serve the Vietnamese, e.g., Vann, Ramsey and others.

Unhappily, CORDS had many minus points. A major one happened because AID was such a large bureaucracy, and there were a lot of ineffective duds on the payroll. There were people who were qualified, for example, by academic or government rank, but simply could not relate to people,

or help them. A CORDS aide might have a PhD in Southeast Asian culture, but perhaps had never been in Asia before — all his knowledge came from books. Many people could not relate to their daily work in the field.

One former CORDS assistant told me there was too much emphasis on paperwork — the old charts, graphs and reports game, leading to lights at the end of tunnels. He also told me that many of the Washingtonian cum Saigon academics tended to be snobbish toward military enlisted personnel who worked with them in CORDS programs.

"One joker as much as told me that he had a PhD and was therefore right and that I was only a little enlisted puke anyway," my friend told me. "This shit was more at home in the Caravelle bar than in a refugee camp along the Cambodian border."

He laughed and added, "I remember the Public Safety guys, too. Some of the instructors who taught the Vietnamese traffic control and investigation were great. But we had these jerks who used to come out from Can Tho and Saigon to supervise security — you know, one-hour visits to the field to get the spitshines dusty.

"These assholes would arrive in a gleaming blue and grey Air America chopper. It was hard not to laugh when they'd disembark — wearing Ramar of the Jungle bush suits, or exotic Korean cammies. They carried Uzis or Swedish Ks with a top-mounted strap. The weapons were always spotless, pristine, unboiled. They'd wear polished jump boots, too. Real heroes.

"I'm not sure who laughed hardest — us or the Vietnamese. Anyway, these clowns were sent to help us solve our security problems and in 99 percent of the cases they had no idea what the problems even were, much less how to solve them. What a waste."

There were good people working for CORDS. Usually, you could tell who the good ones were because they were out in the field working with the people, solving the problems at the village and camp level, bringing in the fertilizer, the security supplies, the food and medical supplies.

Another of CORDS activities was control of the PRT teams, provincial reporting teams of three Vietnamese with an American advisor. Their teams were, in effect, intelligence and propaganda operatives.

—J.D.T.

brass, predicting drastic outcomes unless the central government became strong both in deed and combat.

"Damn it, this country is going right down the toilet unless Saigon changes. People aren't going to give their lives to support one dictator in place of another dictator, communist or not."

The Thieu government demanded that Vann be fired and sent home. Washington asked Vann to apologize. Instead, Vann released a list of specific suggestions for winning the war, "something we're not doing now," he added to his public memo.

Vann's ideas included the following:

- AID materials should be marked and packaged so it appears they are coming from the Saigon government. We should let Vietnamese themselves do the face-to-face distribution to their own people. It's good public relations.
- We need much more help in medicine, engineering and agriculture. The money blown away in several B-52 raids would be better spent on the civilian. Helping these people in the villages with their everyday problems will win more loyalists than napalm, B-52 bombings or firefights in their villages.
- South Vietnamese night patrols must be stepped up to deny the VC their best tactic. The VC now own the night. They can't fight in the day. Let's take that away from them with aggressive night action, throwing a big blanket over their whole operation.
- Immediately stop all mass bombing and unobserved blanket artillery fire. Our massive firepower is the best recruiting agent the VC has.
- Get the South Vietnamese army into the field. Get rid of the nepotism and graft among the politically appointed senior officers and political families and officials. Get fighting men in there and let them lead their own troops into combat. We must help and we must advise. But it is not our country. Let them fight. We must not be their surrogate warriors."

Reaction was predictable — the American brass was horrified. For example, one of Vann's great critics was Gen. William Westmoreland, military commander in Vietnam. After Vann's return to that country, one general outside the Delta asked Westmoreland's advice about getting Vann to train his region's pacification people and to help their program.

Astonished, William Westmoreland blurted, "Good God, you actually want that loudmouthed madman? You're welcome to him, but you take him at your own risk."

SOF publisher Bob Brown served in Vietnam at that time and knew Vann. He says, "That wild man didn't care who controlled what countryside. If he had somewhere he wanted to go, for whatever reason, he'd just up and go. Sometimes he

that my neighbors on either side were the sisters of local Viet Cong field leaders. For a civilian, I'm not too dumb at choosing houses," the ruddy-faced Vann explained

to a concerned AID official who came visiting from Saigon.

Back in Vietnam only three months, Vann started doing his number on the

had to duck bullets from sentries on both sides."

Brown tells of an incident where John Vann was visiting a Vietnamese friend and had to evacuate in a hurry. Still dressed in traditional black pajamas, he jumped into his borrowed jeep and ripped down the road. He tore right through a sleeping South Vietnamese checkpoint, where they recovered and sent automatic weapons fire after his red taillights.

**"They thought Vann was a VC in a stolen jeep."**

"They thought he was a VC in a stolen vehicle. He almost got zapped coming into our zone, too. He was fine, but the people he had borrowed the vehicle from were quite pissed about the bullet holes and dents in it. Vann just smiled and went off somewhere to fall asleep," Brown related.

Vann, the civilian advisor with the amazing mobility and power, earned his salary with his pacification successes and intelligence work. For example, recently declassified documents show that he predicted the 1968 Tet offensive, both in private cables and on the record. It seems the CIA, alone, among all the intelligence gathering apparatus in Southeast Asia, had given clear, advance warning of the Tet operation. Much of the credit is due John Vann and his people. After the action, Vann was also alone — at the time — analyzing it as an American victory.

**"The VC shot their wad with Tet."**

Vann saw the war change, first with the Tet offensive. He explained, "Tet is a powerful thing for the Vietnamese. There is a strong belief here that whoever is the first visitor on Tet brings with him the luck of that new year.

"The VC were the first 'visitor' of 1968 and in a big way. That year brought more havoc, death, fire and general massive destruction to Vietnam than any other year. The Vietnamese blamed it on the Tet belief and were soon openly hostile to the enemy. They thought it was the VC who had precipitated that year of horror and bad luck.

"They shot their wad. Sure they won a propaganda victory with Tet, but it was at a helluva cost. If our myopic-minded bastards in Washington had any sense we would have finished the whole business right then," Vann concluded in a 1969 briefing that was not appreciated by the U.S. Senators who heard it.

He continued, "The enemy could have had a stunning victory if they had withdrawn after the initial attacks. But I guess their side has its stupid pricks, too. Some asshole communist ordered those North Vietnamese units to stand and fight. What a crock of shit. They were good soldiers in their kind of fight. But *that* was our ballgame. We beat hell out of them ... killed thousands of their best troops. What stupidity, wasting the best units in anyone's army that way."

Another factor of change, according to Vann, was when the war switched from an agrarian rebellion to an invasion from the North.

"Before the North invaded this was a civil war, a rebellion of the rural people against the corrupt government in Saigon. The peoples of the North and South have been enemies for years. Indeed, there is as much hate between them as there is for westerners. When the North invaded, the rebellion became an open war."

Vann criticized the conduct of the war quite loudly and bitterly to the American

get the war off its dead ass as far as our 'allies' are concerned."

**"We won't win this war by being John Wayne."**

Yet, despite the increased activity of the Vietnamese and despite his own dramatic success in the Mekong Delta, Vann was not one of those "light-at-the-end-of-the-tunnel" buffs. He was realistic about the war, when it was going well and when it was going poorly. Overall, he didn't see a total victory and often said so.



Burial at Arlington for John Paul Vann. At subsequent White House ceremony, President Nixon awarded Vann Medal of Freedom, nation's highest civilian citation, posthumously. Photo: UPI.

press. He said, "What kind of damn war is this when American teenagers are drafted and sent over here to fight and maybe die, while those bastards in Saigon refuse to draft their own teenagers to fight in their own country?"

His fight to mobilize South Vietnam was won only after his stories reached American eyes and ears, stirring public opinion. American officials had not wanted the public to learn about the no-draft policy of the Thieu regime. But American public opinion forced American officials to pressure the Saigon government to draft Vietnamese youth.

For his efforts, John Vann was reprimanded by Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, who wrote that Vann had created unnecessary problems with his "tasteless and embarrassing diatribe about our ally's conscription policies ... a wholly internal matter."

Vann's response was typical: "What in hell do I care what he writes, so long as we

"I fear the communists have the patience to outwait us. They're prepared to wait four years, five years, 10 years, two decades if need be," he explained. "Study their history and their methods. Study their philosophy. We won't win this war by being John Wayne calling out the Marines for a massive assault. This is a war that is much more subtle than that. A lot of things must change here in South Vietnam [Saigon] and in Washington before I'm going to start looking cheerfully into the future of this country."

As Tom Mason noted, "You have to remember that John Vann spent damn near a fifth of his life, not counting his W.W. II time, there, trying to bring some justice for the people. He didn't want America to colonize the area, but he didn't want the Reds to do it either."

Vann was a realist. His view of the war continued to bump into those of the VIPs who spread the official whitewash that we were winning. Vann told the truth — we were losing.

### **"Stop arresting my people!"**

Another of John Vann's unpopular causes was his defense of certain South Vietnamese officials who were jailed by the corrupt Thieu dictatorship. Thieu had a habit of framing his political opposition, arresting them, then dumping them into prisons in the interest of his own personal "national security." This infuriated Vann, as many of Thieu's political opponents were some of Vann's best people. Our civilian advisors used to personally scream at the imperturbable Bunker, our stately Ambassador, about the injustice.

Bunker, part of the powerful Washington power establishment, finally asked for and got permission to order Vann to "cease all public statements about internal political activities . . . by order of the highest authority."

Ironically, after Vann's death, Bunker would say smoothly, "In the time of my service in Vietnam I know of no more dedicated American nor one more deserving of his country's gratitude."

Earlier, in another fight, Vann jumped all over Bunker's backing of the Saigon government's request not to use the independent Montagnards as troops. Vann, who knew their loyal effectiveness from CIA use of the tough tribesmen, brewed enough public stink and leaked enough horror stories to win that political fight. The Montagnards served well, despite their hatred for the central government, which also hated them. History proved Vann right again, although he was stepping in mighty deep muck, and leaving embarrassing footprints on the State Department carpet.

### **"This war calls for a knife, a rifle and a well-trained man."**

He also put his words about the indiscriminate killing by massive bombing and blind artillery attacks into black headline type back in the States, saying, "Vietnam is a political-guerrilla war. It calls for the utmost discrimination in killing the enemy. Despite the big-strike propaganda, a knife, rifle, and a man trained well with them is best for our purpose. Tanks, artillery, and this massive bombing are the worst thing we could do right now.

"We are killing thousands of innocent people to make them safe from communism. This is madness. Our bombing is creating more enemies than it kills."

Vann modified his anti-bombing stand later though, when it involved stopping the large-scale invasion by North Vietnamese troops in 1972. He said, "I strongly support bombing enemy troops, but not just plastering everything that moves down there. We must use tactical B-52 strikes to protect our efforts."

### **"Isn't peace our goal in Vietnam?"**

Despite his ruffling of official plumage, Vann was getting very dramatic results in his province. Working well with

the local military, including excellent relations with the U.S. Army Special Forces, Vann proved his concepts worked.

"In 1969, we suffered 150 enemy incidents a day. Now, [1971] we range from 12 to 20 a day. There are potentially 20,000 significant targets here in the Mekong Delta, and if we have only a dozen or so incidents then I conclude most of the population is living in peace. Isn't peace our goal here in Vietnam?"

Vann cited further statistics of success. "In 1968, we controlled 3 million people in the Delta. Now, three years later, we have 5.8 million folks under our effective protection programs. That is out of a total population of 6.2 million people, which, incidentally, is one-third of all the people in South Vietnam.

"We forced the enemy out into the open. We took away his night capability. We got the people on our side, so they no longer feared, trusted or supported the VC. We forced the VC to commit to a more conventional style of war.

"That meant the VC and North Vietnamese needed more soldiers, more taxes and more support. They had to lean on the populace more, which drove the people into our camp.

"We got away from massive bombings, tanks, massed artillery and whole divisions of American troops. Instead, we opened the concept of Popular and Regional Force platoons for our hamlets. We established popular elections and by 1971, 95 percent of the Delta's hamlets had freely elected local officials running things."

### **"We destroyed the VC's power base."**

Vann continued, "In 1968, the VC controlled 2,100 hamlets in this province. Now, we control 4,000, there are about 550 'contested' hamlets, and we figure the VC control about 14.

"We won this control not by destroying hamlets. Instead we destroyed the VC's power base. We took care of the people's needs and they helped us. That's how you win the Vietnam war!"

Early in 1972, Vann was brought home for a personal debriefing by a president anxious to make political points with voters that year. John Vann tried to convince Richard Nixon to make an honest, open prosecution of the war. He also tried to sell him on his idea of having junior NCOs and officers come in from the action for personal briefings.

"I don't think he heard a lot I said," a tired John Vann told friends as he left on his last shuttle to Vietnam.

Early in June, another newsman told the *New York Times's* Paul Montgomery, "John is just too good here. One of these days when he gets killed, and he will, people will realize what he's done for us. He comes closer to being the indispensable man than any other American in Vietnam. That is very dangerous, especially right now."

Former Sgt. Jerry Skinner recalls John Vann's last missions. "We had our advisors trapped with the 22nd ARVN at Tan Cahn during the siege there, and Mr. Vann said he'd go in and get them out. He personally flew his own chopper out of here [Pleiku] and got his ass shot down. That tough turkey hopped a ride back and borrowed a medevac chopper. They forced that one down on him too, the Charlie gunners did. Third time was Mr. Vann's charm. He flew through their fire and brought our people out."

His last mission was on 9 June 1972, a typical Vann jaunt, braving enemy fire to fly into a city ringed by North Vietnamese regulars. He planned to spend a night with the troops and direct some operations from there. According to military radio reports, Vann and two passengers left Pleiku at 9:15 p.m. for Kontum, the city under siege 30 miles to the north.

"Mr. Vann's being there meant a lot to the morale of the guys and that's where he was headed," Jerry Skinner said.

Ten miles out of Pleiku, North Vietnamese gunners picked up Vann's small helicopter and opened fire, as they had done at him so many times in the past. As in the past, his ship went down. Only this time, John Paul Vann didn't walk away. In the morning, South Vietnamese and American troops found the bodies of John Vann and his two companions inside their shot-up, burned-out helicopter.

Robert Komer, CORDS director before Vann, said, "John was the most effective and experienced American who ever served in Vietnam. His loss is the equivalent of at least two divisions."

Vann would have liked that — practical, but probably understated, to the end.

The *Washington Post* called John Vann, "the ablest and most effective American to ever be in Vietnam."

John Vann was given a hero's burial in Arlington National Cemetery on 16 June, by family and friends. Secretary of State William P. Rogers represented President Nixon, while other high-ranking officials of State, the Army and the CIA attended. Some were men John Vann had argued with bitterly. Now, they were there to pay their respects to their critic who had been so very right.

After the Arlington ceremony, John Vann's family was driven to the White House, where President Nixon presented them with John Vann's Medal of Freedom, the highest tribute this nation can award a civilian.

Neil Sheehan said of John Vann, "He was like the poor hero in those war movies who gets killed right before the ceasefire by going on just one more mission. But that was Johnny's way. I only hope he didn't see us lose Saigon."

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# EDITORIAL

VIETNAM MYTHS by Millard Grimes

**A**S the 1970s drew toward an end, several myths from the 1960s became virtually accepted as truth and dogma, and they are dangerous myths that should not pass into the history books unchallenged.

First, there is the broadly-accepted myth that the U.S. leaders who made the decisions that led to this nation's mission in Vietnam were wrong in both vision and morality.

Secondly, there is the corresponding myth that the protesters, demonstrators and other vociferous critics of U.S. policy in Vietnam were right.

And thirdly, there is the oft-repeated claim that the United States "lost" its first war in Vietnam.

The decision by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations to send U.S. military advisors and aid, and then troops and massive air support, to South Vietnam was based on a belief that it was in the best interests of the people of South Vietnam and of the United States for that country to maintain a non-communist, pro-western government, and that military aggression by North Vietnam should be discouraged and turned back.

Further, the policy-makers believed that if North Vietnam's aggression was successful in South Vietnam it could lead to further aggression in Southeast Asia.

**T**ODAY, some 16 years after the decisive moves toward implementing the U.S. policy, we know that the leaders at that time were right in their main conclusions:

- South Vietnam was threatened by a Communist takeover from North Vietnam. The people of South Vietnam — and of Cambodia and other neighboring nations — were unquestionably better off under non-communist, pro-western regimes, and the best interests of the United States were better served by such regimes.

- The leaders were also correct about the much-maligned "domino theory," as North Vietnam now controls not only South Vietnam, but also Cambodia and Laos, and poses a threat to Thailand, Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries.

On one other important point the U.S. leaders were right and their critics wrong. The war in South Vietnam was not a "civil war." North Vietnam's armies completed the conquest and North Vietnam's government controls South Vietnam to-

day, even to the point of changing the name of its capital city from Saigon to Ho Chi Minh City.

Whatever else might be said of the outcome, it is difficult to argue that the South Vietnamese or the Cambodians are better off than they were under the regimes which the U.S. attempted to bolster and sustain during the 1960s.

And it is on that point that the protesters, demonstrators and critics of U.S. policy in Vietnam stand clearly branded as having been wrong.

They contended that it did not matter what kind of regime governed South Vietnam.

Let them ask the "boat people" if it matters.

And then there is the oft-heard lamentation that the U.S. "lost" the Vietnam War.

The clear and indisputable record shows that the U.S. withdrew its troops from Vietnam — mainly because of domestic pressure from the demonstrators and the anti-Vietnam movement — in 1973, leaving the South Vietnamese government in control of most of the land area below the North-South border.

It was nearly two years after U.S. troops left Vietnam that North Vietnam launched an all-out military offensive — in violation of the treaty signed in 1973, which it had violated in lesser ways throughout the previous two years — and this offensive succeeded in routing South Vietnam's army.

The U.S. mission succeeded up to the point when its troops withdrew. The war was lost two years later, in 1975, when the U.S. government declined to again become involved militarily.

**S**OUTH Asia is a place of tragedy today, but it is a tragedy that U.S. policies of the 1960s sought to prevent, and which failed in large measure because of opposition from Americans who were wrong both factually and morally.

The U.S. mission in Vietnam was noble, and its warriors were brave and deserving of honor.

The "losers" were the people of Vietnam, both north and south, and the people of Cambodia, and eventually perhaps the people of Thailand, Malaysia and Burma.



*This editorial is reprinted with the permission of the Columbus, Ga., Enquirer. Millard Grimes, former editor-in-chief of the Enquirer, and now a contributing columnist, heads Grimes Publications in Opelika, Ala. Grimes, 49, has won seven state awards for best column and a national award for the best column explaining democracy. The above editorial was entered in the Congressional Record in 1979.*



# Wheelgun Winner

by Chuck Taylor

**G**OOD gunsmiths are rare these days, and one who specializes in handguns is even rarer. Oh, I know what we see in the gun magazines — advertisements by the bushel, but even some of the big boys in the field do some poor work.

In SOF, February 1979, I reported on the superb combat-customized .45 autos built by Ikey Stark and George Derndorff at Sports West, Inc., Denver, Colo. Now, I bring to you another shop that excels in fine workmanship: Trulock Firearms, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 74, Whigham, GA 31797. Owned and operated by George Trulock, Jr., Trulock Firearms specializes in revolver conversions. Perhaps the term, “revolver conversions,” doesn’t excite you much and should be clarified.

## “I produce good workmanship and I care for my customers.”

Putting it another way, how would you feel about a .44 Special or .45 Colt revolver built to your specifications for a reasonable price? And, how would you feel about 1½-inch groups from a rest at 50 meters? Interested? I thought you would be and so was I when I received a letter from Trulock in January 1979. He advised me that his was “a small but progressive shop that still produced good workmanship, but more importantly, cared about its customers.” He also stated that he “would be pleased to build an auto or revolver to my specs to illustrate and substantiate his claims.”

I thought that either George Trulock was exactly what he claimed to be: an honest businessman who cared about his customers and built superior guns, or — a BS artist.

I wrote him back and requested the following features be built into an N-frame Smith & Wesson revolver:

1. Five-inch barrel.
2. .45 Colt caliber.
3. Baughman-type front sight.
4. 2.0 lb. single-action trigger pull.
5. Blue finish equivalent to S&W “bright blue.”
6. Lightest DA pull possible without sacrifice in reliable cartridge igni-

tion.

7. Adjustable S&W rear sight w/white outline notch.

A pretty tall order, since the combination, particularly items 4 and 6, demanded difficult gunsmithing, not to mention item 2 — .45 Colt, not ACP.

At this point, I expected no further response from Trulock, but received a letter shortly thereafter advising me that my request was no problem and that it would be a good measurement of his skills

## “No gun can be this smooth and work!”

I gave Trulock the go-ahead and eight weeks later the gun arrived. I distinctly remember the scene in the office here at Gunsite when the box was opened. Establishment *patron* Jeff Cooper did the honors, threatening anyone who dared intervene with immense bodily harm, and, upon fondling George Trulock’s work, particularly the DA pull, he turned to me and said, “No gun can be this smooth and work — it’s got to be broken or something!” We pulled the side-plate. Nothing was broken and it *was* that smooth!

We immediately retired to the Gunsite pistol range and proceeded to work out with the piece. Yep! It really was smooth, the DA pull actually giving the firer the impression that the strain screw had backed out of the frame but the gun went bang every time the trigger was pressed, both in the single-action and trigger-cocking modes.

Three months and 700 rounds later, we find that it is still reliable. Accuracy? I’m good for about two-inch groups at 50 meters but this gun helped even me. Not only that, everyone who shot it hit everything they shot at, even at ranges past reasonable handgun range, like 100 meters.

I had to go hunting with the gun and loaded up what was to become my standard load for this piece, 9.0 grains of Unique with the Lyman 225-grain Cast RN bullet. I spent the next afternoon harassing the area’s jack-rabbit population with the best handgun results I had ever had,

and although it certainly cannot be considered representative, I remember with special fondness the 100-meter-plus hit on a jack! Not definitive, but really satisfying nevertheless! What was, without question, definitive was the fact that the superb trigger and glass-like action of the gun brought out my best shooting skills, and a number of jacks bit the dust that day.

For social purposes, the gun is the absolute apotheosis of a law-enforcement revolver. For the uniformed officer, the five-inch barrel allows excellent handling characteristics while not over long and awkward. It balances well and if one desires a shorter barrel for concealment purposes, then Trulock can provide you with a 3.5-inch tube, as well as black chrome or Armoloy finishes. Yep, this gun is the realization of the concerned police officer’s dream.

It is also in the best revolver caliber for fight-stopping. That factory 250-grain clipped-point lead bullet at about 870 fps (or 820 fps from the short barrel) goes well over 60 on the Hatcher scale and scores a whopping 32.6 on Cooper’s Scale (where 20 is passing) from a 3.5-inch barrel.

By contrast, the standard police-service .38 Special goes 14.4 and the so-called “plus-P” .38 loads of the same bullet weight check in at 16.0. The .357, from the standard police-service four-inch barrel length, calculates to 17.6 and it is only when one gets into the big calibers that anything even compares to the .45 Colt in stopping power. The .44 Special tabulates to 25.8, the .41 Police to 27.9, and the venerable .45 ACP to 31.9.

Good handloads, not necessarily heavy-loaded either, can improve the .45 Colt’s score to about 34.6, if it matters, using the big, nasty, beautiful Lyman No. 454424 250-grain SWC of Elmer Keith’s design.

The blued finish on the .45 I received was excellent and I further complemented it with the addition of Frank Pachmayr’s black rubber stocks.

Cylinder gap on the gun was a mere .008 and, in fact, I was concerned when I first miked it as such, because I was afraid that when the metal expanded from heat, the cylinder and forcing-cone might actually touch, tying up the gun at worst and dragging, causing a sluggish action, at best, but nothing happened. The gun works magnificently and I take pride in stating that it is one of my most prized revolvers. And — no, it is not for sale, so don’t ask.

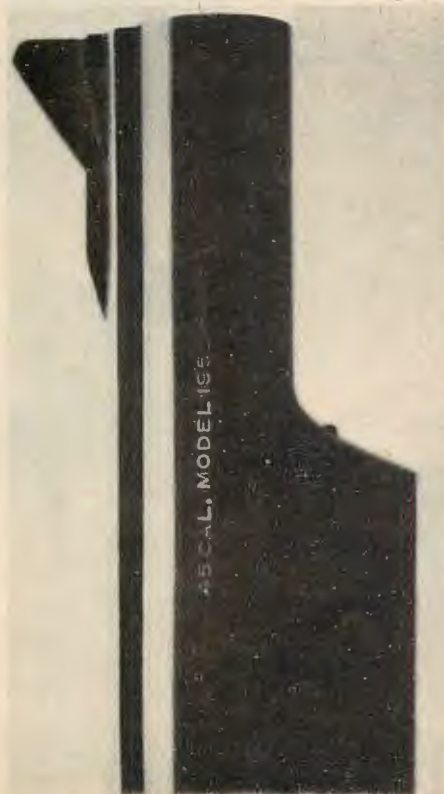
## Trulock deserves recognition as a master gunsmith.

If all of George Trulock’s work is like this, there can be no question that he deserves recognition, not only as a master gunsmith, but as a master businessman as well. It took a lot of guts to write unsolicited, stating he did good work and would I care to see for myself! All the

time, knowing fully what the results in print would be if he couldn't live up to his claims.

If you haven't guessed it by now, I heartily endorse Trulock's work to anyone who is interested in a really primo wheel-gun. For those of you who like the .44 Special, Trulock offers that caliber also. The two best heavy-duty sidearm calibers in the world, and some of the most magnificent workmanship I have ever had the pleasure to see — what else can we ask for, besides a reasonable price — and Trulock has that too.

This man and his guns have absolutely got to be winners.



S&W M55 cal. .45 target barrel was used, cut to 5-in. length required by author. Taylor feels 5-inch barrel balances best for his purposes.



Taylor prefers wide, target type hammer on his revolvers and specified that such be the case with the gun that Trulock built for him.

Left side view of author's "Trulock Special." Note clean lines and balanced appearance. Taylor feels is the best revolver he ever worked with.



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# POT SHOTS

by J. David Truby



"What — register my spear? Never! Who knows what the Bureau of Spirits, Smokes and Spears will want to ban next!"



"Yes, I remember the last time we had to fight for our right to bear arms."



Soviet-proposed SALT II treaty version of American MX missile goes for initial test flight.





"How'd you know I was a presidential staff aide?"



Long-suppressed photo — just declassified — shows Pentagon's prototype individual trooper transport for use in Vietnam rice paddies, saw grass. "Riding this, our boys can see above the

terrain and have the advantage over hidden, dug-in VC," said Lt. Col. Nester Furringstrip, chief R&D officer in bizarre equipment section.



## TAX DEDUCTIBLE GIFTS

For the U.S. Biathlon Team may be sent to:

**Treasurer  
USMPBA  
206 Lincoln Ave.  
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(Specify Biathlon)**

The U.S. Biathlon Team is funded primarily through private tax-deductible contributions. Your help is needed, and as an acknowledgement of your generous support for the U.S. Biathlon Team, you will receive:

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- \$25** Membership in the USMPBA plus an official U.S. Biathlon Team shoulder patch.
- \$50** Membership in the USMPBA plus a copy of *Biathlon*, Art Stegen's definitive new book about the sport. A 144-page hard-bound volume combining a complete training manual and a fascinating look at the history of biathlon, including numerous photos and illustrations. Additional copies of *Biathlon* are available from the USMPBA or the National Rifle Association Publications for \$18.

The biathlon is a grueling combination of cross-country skiing and rifle marksmanship. After skiing all-out, the competitor unslings his rifle and shoots at a 50-meter target. Fast skiing alone will not win the event, just as great shooting alone will not win it. Only a combination of the two gives the competitor a winning score.

Please help these superb biathletes. In March there are three World Cup events in Finland, Sweden, and USSR. And three Olympic biathlon events will be held at Lake Placid, in 1980. Support our shooters.



# SHOOTOUT: 9mm vs. .45

## Will Military Adopt 9mm Parabellum as U.S. Service Pistol?

by N.E. MacDougald



**R**EADY on the left, ready on the right, ready on the firing line . . . commence firing.

The last syllable was echoing downrange as we emptied our guns. The odious buzzer sounded. Our rangemaster surveyed the firing line and announced: *The line is clear.* Some of these damn things could really shoot. The one I shot was more accurate than I.

But I couldn't share a word of the guns' performance with our readers. Here we were with the world's only working models of unique 9mm pistols, and we couldn't talk about them. We could inspect, shoot and photograph these exotic sidearms, but we couldn't share our opinions with our readers. All performance data are competition-sensitive at this time. And one of these pistols will probably replace the Model 1911A1 .45 ACP as this country's military sidearm.

Eglin AFB in Florida's panhandle is luxurious enough to make a ground-pounder want to defect. More than 720 square miles of everything from swamp to manicured golf course. The land complex is two-thirds the size of Rhode Island. Founded in 1934, it was first called Valparaiso Bombing and Gunnery Base.

Armament Laboratory's nondescript brick exterior belies the activity within. Many non-nuclear weapons began in this quiet office building at mainbase Eglin.

Chief of Guns, Rockets and Explosives Division Dale M. Davis works out of a cluttered office here. And Project Engineer John "Jack" C. Robbins also has a cubicle, although he's often running live fire tests at a nearby range. Both these men are engineers, not paper shufflers, although their jobs require enormous amounts of it. (See accompanying interviews with Davis and Robbins.)

They are charged with the weighty responsibility of recommending a 9mm pistol to be used by the U.S. armed forces. The Joint Service Small Arms Program has authorized the Air Force to develop a new "personal defense weapon." In other words, a sidearm.

Publisher Brown, Managing Editor Poos and I traveled to Florida just in time for a tropical storm and plenty of liquid sunshine. We met Robbins and talked with him briefly. Next day we rendezvoused at a 50-yard outdoor pistol range at Hurlburt Field on Eglin AFB. We shot the six pistols featured in this article and learned enormous amounts of information from Davis and Robbins.

Being engineers, the two started their project from scratch. Rather than prejudice arms manufacturers, the team wrote their requirements as broadly as possible to encourage innovation.

Previously, most research and development in small arms was done in-house at places like Springfield Armory and Aberdeen Proving Grounds or Edgewood Arsenal. But now research and development is delegated to private corporations that



Length.....	8.07 in.	204.98 mm
Height.....	5.44 in.	138.18 mm
Width.....	1.41 in.	35.81 mm
Grip		
Thickness.....	1.35 in.	34.47 mm
Width (front to rear), top.....	2.01 in.	51.18 mm
Width (front to rear), bottom.....	2.12 in.	53.85 mm
Trigger pull distance (Trigger to rear of grip)		
Single Action.....	2.59 in.	65.84 mm
Double Action.....	3.95 in.	74.80 mm
Sights		
Height—front sight.....	0.15 in.	3.81 mm
Width—front sight.....	0.14 in.	3.56 mm
Height—rear sight.....	0.19 in.	4.83 mm
Width—rear sight notch.....	0.12 in.	3.18 mm
Sight radius.....	5.17 in.	151.64 mm
Weight.....	2.11 lb.	NA gm
Trigger pull (average)		
Single Action.....	4.00 lb.	1814.40 gm
Double Action.....	15.93 lb.	7221.31 gm
Magazine		
Capacity, standard.....	14 rds.	
Weight, standard (empty).....	0.23 lb.	104.33 gm
Weight, standard (loaded).....	0.62 lb.	281.23 gm
Capacity, high-capacity.....	NA rds	
Weight, high-capacity (empty).....	NA lb.	NA gm
Weight, high-capacity (loaded).....	NA lb.	NA gm
Barrel		
Length.....	4.47 in.	113.54 mm
Number of lands & grooves.....	6	
Direction of twist.....	Left	
Twist rate.....	1 turn in 16 in.	406.40 mm



Length .....	8.54 in.	216.92 mm
Height .....	4.61 in.	117.09 mm
Width .....	1.47 in.	37.54 mm
Grip		
Thickness .....	1.38 in.	35.05 mm
Width (front to rear), top .....	2.02 in.	51.31 mm
Width (front to rear), bottom .....	2.17 in.	55.15 mm
Trigger pull distance (Trigger to rear of grip)		
Single Action .....	2.37 in.	60.20 mm
Double Action .....	2.77 in.	70.36 mm
Sights		
Height—front sight .....	0.13 in.	3.30 mm
Width—front sight .....	0.12 in.	3.05 mm
Height—rear sight .....	0.15 in.	3.81 mm
Width—rear sight notch .....	0.11 in.	2.79 mm
Sight radius .....	6.34 in.	161.04 mm
Weight .....	1.91 lb.	866.58 gm
Trigger pull (average)		
Single Action .....	5.50 lb.	2994.80 gm
Double Action .....	12.33 lb.	5592.89 gm
Magazine		
Capacity, standard .....	15 rds.	
Weight, standard (empty) .....	0.25 lb.	113.40 gm
Weight, standard (loaded) .....	0.66 lb.	299.38 gm
Capacity, high-capacity .....	20 rds	
Weight, high-capacity (empty) .....	0.33 lb.	149.69 gm
Weight, high-capacity (loaded) .....	0.93 lb.	421.85 gm
Barrel		
Length .....	5.00 in.	127.00 mm
Number of lands & grooves .....	7	
Direction of twist .....	Right	
Twist rate .....	1 turn in 10 in.	254.00 mm

thrive on competition and possess the necessary production capabilities and personnel.

Results are encouraging. The pistols we fired, Beretta, Colt, FN (Fabrique Nationale), Smith and Wesson, and Star, are all fine weapons. They all have strong-points and weak points and each has its own feel.

Here is the draft copy of 9mm parameters as defined by Davis and Robbins. Note that of 5,000 rounds of ball ammunition to be fired, a total of *eight* major malfunctions is allowed. Whatever else the new pistol may be, it will be reliable.

#### ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS

##### A. Caliber: 9mm NATO

##### B. Physical Characteristics:

###### 1. Thumb Safety:

- a. Easily operated by thumb of shooting hand when holding weapon in firing position.
- b. Operable by right or left hand shooter.
- c. Shall lock firing pin when in "on" or "safe" position.

###### 2. Trigger Pull:

- a. Single Action — 4.0 lbs.  $\pm$ 0.5 lbs.
- b. Double Action — 10.0 lbs.  $\pm$ 2.0 lbs.

###### 3. Magazine:

- a. Minimum Capacity: 13 rds.
- b. Must be interchangeable between weapons.
- c. Must fall free of weapon when magazine catch is operated.
- d. Must be capable of fast and easy insertion by non-shooting hand and positively retained.
- e. Must not be subject to being easily damaged to the point of being non-functional.
- f. Must have a removable floor plate to permit cleaning.
- g. Must have a minimum clearance between the nose of a standard 9mm NATO and inside front face of magazine of .025 in. The cartridge base is against rear magazine wall when this measurement is taken.

###### 4. Magazine Catch: Shall be operable by the right hand without assistance from left when holding weapon in firing position (Like M1911A1 Pistol).

###### 5. Silencer:

- a. Must be capable of utilization with a silencer or sound suppressor without modification.
- b. Must be capable of locking the slide to provide for the option of single-shot operation when utilizing silencer. This option is to be operable only when silencer is attached.
- c. Must be capable of operating in normal semi-automatic manner with silencer attached and when utilizing either stan-

dard supersonic or alternate subsonic ammunition.

6. Accuracy: Average mean radius, at 50 yards, shall not be more than 1.4 inches greater than that for the same ammunition when fired from a test or manned barrel.

###### 7. Sights:

###### a. Front Sight:

1. Appear as square post to shooter.
2. 1/8 to 1/10 in. wide.
3. 1/8 to 1/4 in. high.

###### b. Rear Sight:

1. Appear as square notch to shooter.
2. Adjustable for windage by drifting in slot like M1911A1.
3. Must be rugged. Must be capable of withstanding impact with a hard surface if pistol is dropped so as to impact on rear sight.
4. An adjustable sight is not desired.
5. Notch must appear to allow sufficient light (approx. 1/32 in.) on either side of front sight.
8. Slide Stop: Slide must stay open following last shot.
9. Weight: Maximum weight unloaded is 2.30 pounds.
10. Lanyard Loop: A lanyard loop (like the M1911 pistol) or lanyard hole is required in the butt. A lanyard swivel that can become entangled in clothing or other items is not desired.

##### C. Operational Characteristics

###### 1. Functioning Reliability

- a. The maximum number of major malfunctions out of 5000 rds. of ball ammunition fired hand held is as follows:
  1. Failure to extract—2
  2. Failure to eject—2
  3. Misfire—2
  4. Uncontrolled Fire—0
  5. Other—2
- b. The maximum number of minor malfunctions out of 5000 rds. fired is as follows:
  1. Failure of slide to lock back after firing last round—20
  2. Failure of magazine to fall free—20
  3. Pierced Primer—5
  4. Other—10

- c. Must not jam under adverse conditions such as sand and mud so as to be inoperable. Under these conditions minor manual assistance is permissible.

###### 2. Safety:

- a. Must be capable of completely loading or unloading and clearing without actuating the trigger.
- b. Must be capable of lowering

the hammer from a cocked position to an uncocked position without actuating the trigger.

## TESTING GUNS FOR PEOPLE

**T**HE testing of several 9mm semi-automatic pistols by the Air Force Armament Division for a possible replacement for the Mod. 1911A1 .45 was accomplished by people firing the weapons, not by firing from machine rests. The reason? People do it better.

As Project Director John (Jack) Robbins explains it:

"What you're looking for in testing a weapon is how it would shoot in the hands of the perfect shooter.

"What the perfect shooter does, is realign the sights after each shot in an effort to get perfect sight alignment each time.

"In contrast, a machine rest does not realign the sights but realigns the frame with each shot. That gives a pretty good indication of how accurate the weapon is, but it doesn't give you the final answer.

"The reason is that if you take a gun that operates with something like the Browning system and you could make one that realigns the barrel with the slide perfectly with each shot, then your perfect shooter would realign the barrel perfectly with the target every shot.

"But if the gun has a loose slide-to-frame fit, the machine rest will indicate poor accuracy, which it would not have with the perfect shooter.

"On the other hand, you take a handgun that has the barrel fixed to the frame with a sloppy slide, then the machine rest is going to show that to be a very accurate piece. But it wouldn't be so for the perfect shooter, because he's aligning the sights the same each time, but the barrel isn't aligning the same with the target each time.

"The bottom line is we're testing guns for use by people. The machine-rest firing doesn't include the human factor at all. It might be okay if we were talking about a weapon that would be fired from a fixed platform.

"But we're talking about a military sidearm to be fired by people and you can't ignore the human factor when you're considering something to be used for that purpose." —Bob Poos

3. Ambidextrous Operation: Must be capable of firing with one hand or two hands, either right or left handed.

4. One Hand Operation: Must be capable of carrying in a safe condition and then drawing and firing with one hand, either right or left hand.
  5. Maintainability: Must be capable of extended use in field with maintenance limited to user level.
  6. Single/Double Action: Normal function is single action with double action available for first shot or second primer strike in case of failure to fire.
- D. Additional Desirable Characteristics: These additional characteristics are not necessary, but are desirable and would enhance the effectiveness of the weapon.
1. Minimum Magazine Capacity: 15 rds.
  2. Maintainability: Must be corrosion resistant under field environment conditions including salt water.
  3. Reliability: Functions without manual assistance under adverse environmental conditions such as sand and mud.
  4. Magazine: Operable under mud and sand conditions.
  5. Magazine Catch: Operable by shooting hand, right or left, while holding weapon in the firing position.
  6. Front Sight: Discernible during

conditions of poor light.

7. Handgrip as small as practical commensurate with double row magazine.
8. Magazine to have a double position feed and be capable of using a stripper clip system.

Not part of the draft, but, according to Robbins, interchangeability of parts among weapons is essential.

After manufacturers submit their pre-production guns, they are tested and evaluated. First the weapon is detail-stripped and inspected. Accuracy is tested in a machine rest and also by shooters of different proficiency. Sustained fire effectiveness is evaluated at the range we SOF staffers fired at. Endurance testing takes place over months. In all, the dozen or so pistols shoot some 400,000 rounds. Environmental hardships include sand, dust, mud, low temperature, high temperature and salt spray. Lethality tests include a comparison of the 9mm with the .45 ACP and the .38 Special. Finally, a drop test determines whether a pistol with safety on will accidentally discharge when dropped from a standard height of four feet.

When testing began, the .45 ACP Model 1911A1 and Model 15 .38 Special revolver were included for comparison. Also tested were Beretta's 92S-1 (a variation on the 92S), Colt's SSP, FN's (Fabrique Nationale) Hi Power, their new FA (fast action) and DA (double action),

Heckler and Koch's P9S and VP-70, Smith and Wesson's new Model 459, and Star's M-28.

Of the preproduction pistols (not available to the general public), all but Beretta's were modifications of Browning's design.

Beretta uses a pivoting barrel lock under the barrel (similar to Walther's P-38), which in battery locks barrel to slide. In recoil, the barrel lock and slide move rearward slightly until the barrel contacts the barrel stop (in the frame), thus stopping the barrel and pushing the unlocking pin forward and rotating the barrel lock downward. This unlocks barrel from slide and allows the slide to continue rearward. If this is difficult to follow, the upshot is Beretta's system is simpler than Browning's.

For space considerations, the accompanying photos and data charts are only for preproduction guns. When the government announces the top two or three contenders, SOF will publish them.

Meanwhile, SOF readers will be the first in the country to read of these weapons, to know that in all probability a 9mm autoloader will replace the venerable .45 and numerous .38 revolvers and to see photos, specs and particulars on these weapons. Good luck guessing which gun may prevail.

## PINPOINT ACCURACY

"PINPOINT accuracy" is doubtless one of the most overworked and overused firearms-related phrases in the English language.

But engineers at the Air Force's Armament Laboratory located on Eglin AFB, Fla., have developed a new concept in handgun bullets that can best be described as a projectile possessing "pinpoint accuracy."

The slug was developed by John (Jack) Robbins, a project engineer at the lab, and Dale Davis, chief of Guns, Rockets and Explosives Division.

Their work came as a spinoff from the Air Force's testing of several 9mm semi-automatic pistols as a possible replacement for the venerable M1911 .45.

Robbins explains:

"When we first started working with the 9mm stuff, we discovered that military ball ammunition was extremely inaccurate. We were averaging an eight to 10-inch extreme spread for a 10-shot group at 50 yards." (Firing was done from a test barrel in a fixed position.)

"So we tried commercial ammo and found it wasn't all that accurate either.

I can't reveal the names, of course, but one famous name-brand had about a six-inch maximum dispersion and another had a four-incher.

"So we started thinking seriously about bullet design. Now we knew that jacketed hollow-point stuff could be very accurate and we decided to see if we could design an accurate full-jacketed 9mm suitable for military purposes.

"We looked at some recent equations relating dispersion to the mass properties of a bullet.

"Essentially, it comes down to three things: increasing the cylindrical section, moving the center of gravity as far backward as possible and moving the center of pressure as far forward as possible.

"The standard 9mm bullet is 115 grains with a hollow base. That's all wrong because you want to move the center of gravity back. It also has that long, rounded nose which is wrong too, because you want to move that center of pressure forward.

"Finally, you want a long cylindrical section to decrease balloting (wobbling in the barrel). The military ball permitted lots of balloting.

"So we sat down and designed a bullet including all those factors. Plus, we took into account feeding qualities because the bullet was intended for use in semi-automatics.

"We got hold of Hornady and asked if they would make some for us, which they did — 6,000 of them. They turned out to have a weight of 125 grains and they had all our specifications incorporated in them.

"We loaded them in fired military cases — same cases used in discovering the eight to 10-inch max dispersion. And we used thrown charges as opposed to weighed charges, since that simulated more closely what we could expect out of routine production. As you can see, we made it as tough on the bullet as we could.

"How well did it work? Well, using the same procedure as with the ball and the commercial, we got groups with extreme dispersion of one inch in 10 shots at 50 yards.

"With commercial brass the max dispersion was 6/10s of an inch."

It's fair to call that pinpoint accuracy, in this writer's opinion.

—Bob Poos

## INTERVIEW:

**P**ROJECT engineer John "Jack" C. Robbins has an impressive background. But then, he has an impressive job: recommending a 9mm replacement for the .45 service pistol, which has been around since 1911.

Born and raised in Wilmington, Del., he moved to Florida after high school and graduated from the University of Miami with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering in 1964. He worked for Pratt and Whitney as a test engineer for experimental rocket engines at Cape Canaveral for two years.

Then in February, 1966, Robbins resigned and joined the Armament Development and Test Center at Eglin AFB, Fla. He worked in the Test Wing for three years, then transferred to the Air Force Armament Lab where he remains. In 1974, he returned to U of M and earned an MS in management science/systems analysis, operations research.

At eight years of age, Robbins received a .22. He's been shooting ever since. At 18, he began buying handguns and competing in local shoots in Delaware. From 1957 to 1963, he was in the USMC Reserve as a small arms instructor, repairman and armorer — and shot on the unit pistol team. In 1962, he was selected for the USMC reserve national team competing at Camp Perry. After that, Robbins got bored of shooting bullseyes and concentrated on combat shooting, which was more fun for him.

Robbins and his 16-year-old son, John, compete in combat matches whenever time permits. At age 13, John set the handgun record at the 1977 Second Chance shoot with a time of 3.9 seconds. Robbins and his son were among those invited to the Bianchi Cup Invitational Pistol Tournament. Robbins placed 21st out of more than 100 top shooters.

In 1977, the Joint Service Small Arms Program was initiated. JSSAP coordinates and manages research and development in weaponry intended for the armed forces. It includes the four conventional service arms and the Coast Guard, although the Coast Guard does not vote. The Army's committee member chairs meetings. According to Robbins, JSSAP promotes commonality of requirements, reduces development costs and time, improves the acquisition system, and achieves interoperability with NATO. As JSSAP project engineer for the Air Force's personal defense weapon development program, Robbins enjoys a great deal of autonomy.

Since joining the AFTL team, Robbins has worked on the IMP project (Individual Multi-Purpose weapon), a .221 survival/defense weapon developed mainly for the Air Force. The Bushmaster .223/



Engineer John "Jack" C. Robbins

5.56mm is the civilian counterpart of the IMP. Robbins participated in the development of the RS-16 (the Rickert 24-hour combat sight). It is a reflex collimator sight (similar to Aim-Point or Single Point) using a superimposed dot and was made for the M-16. In 1974, the Air Force became interested in Smith and Wesson's Model 59. Robbins worked on and off with the 9mm autoloader for more than four years.

Robbins likes being part of JSSAP. "I can use any facet of any of the services. The Air Force is assigned development of personal defense weapons. To accomplish this, I can farm out work to Army facilities such as Aberdeen Proving Ground or Edgewood Arsenal. Or anywhere else I might need work done. We tell them what we need, send them the money and it gets done."

Asked how the 9mm by 19mm Parabelum autoloader program originated, Robbins began by describing deficiencies of the .38 caliber M-15 Smith and Wesson revolver. "It lacks interoperability with NATO and has low fire power, because of low round capacity and slow reload capability. It also has low lethality with a .38 Special round and poor field maintainability. Revolvers are typically handfitted. As soon as something goes wrong with one, it has to go back to depot level or whatever. A field user can't even take the sideplate off to maintain it. So everything rusts up and starts going to hell after 30 days of bad environment.

"We also have logistics considerations for the M-15. All the ones Uncle Sam has are at least 19 years old, been rebuilt at least once. The ones we're rebuilding now are rejected at a rate of 40 percent — four out of 10 get scrapped. And we're having trouble with rebuilt revolvers not meeting specifications. As far as logistics is concerned, revolvers have been a real headache.

"And the .38 cartridge itself is deficient. It was designed for black powder and thus has an excess of weight and brass. It's a wasteful cartridge for modern powders.

"Then there was the bullet-in-the-bore problem. Seems bullets were getting stuck in the barrels of revolvers. There was much testing and evaluating and controversy regarding the cause. But the investigators did not reach a conclusion. The ammunition was in some way at fault. I don't know how many millions of rounds of M-41 .38 ball were destroyed because of it.

"To fortify .38 ammo, the Army developed the PGU-12 for the Air Force. The loading is similar to a Plus P, a lighter bullet with more propellant, hence a higher velocity cartridge. The Navy still uses the M-41 (standard ball), I think. The Army uses the M-41E1. So we are using three cartridges, none satisfactory.

"Some alert Congressman finally got in the act by pointing out that our armed services use 25 different makes, models and types of handguns. Can you imagine the inventory nightmare this creates? Each gun had its own spare parts, etc. There were 101 national stock numbers for handgun ammunition. One stock number was for .38 Long Colt from America's involvement in the Philippine insurrection about the turn of the century."

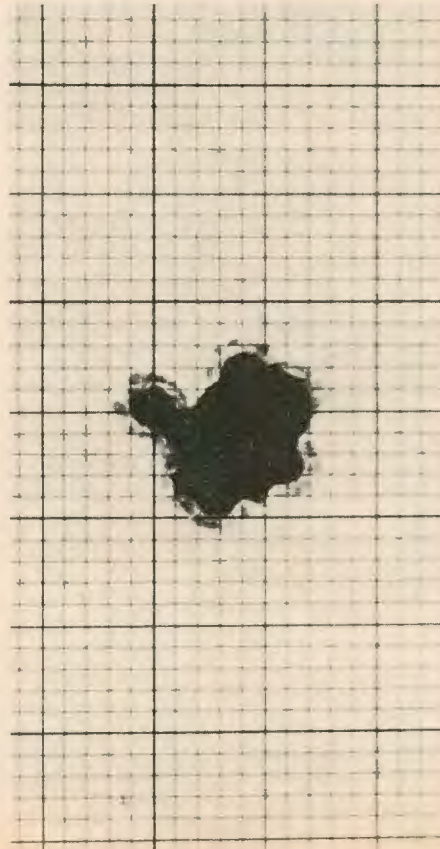
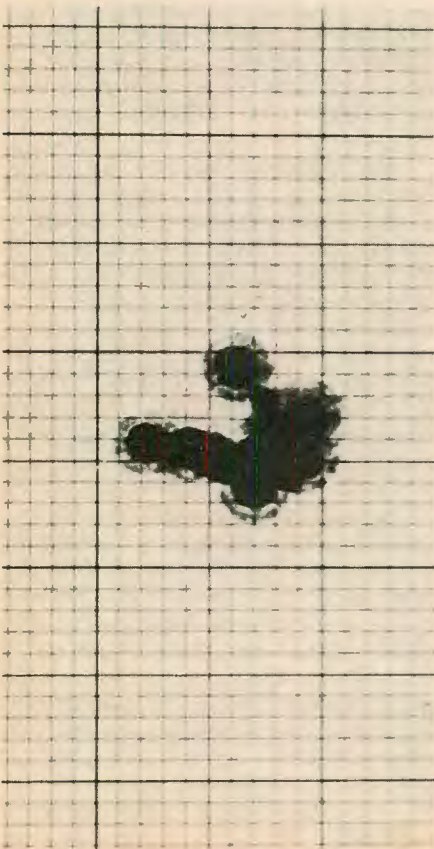
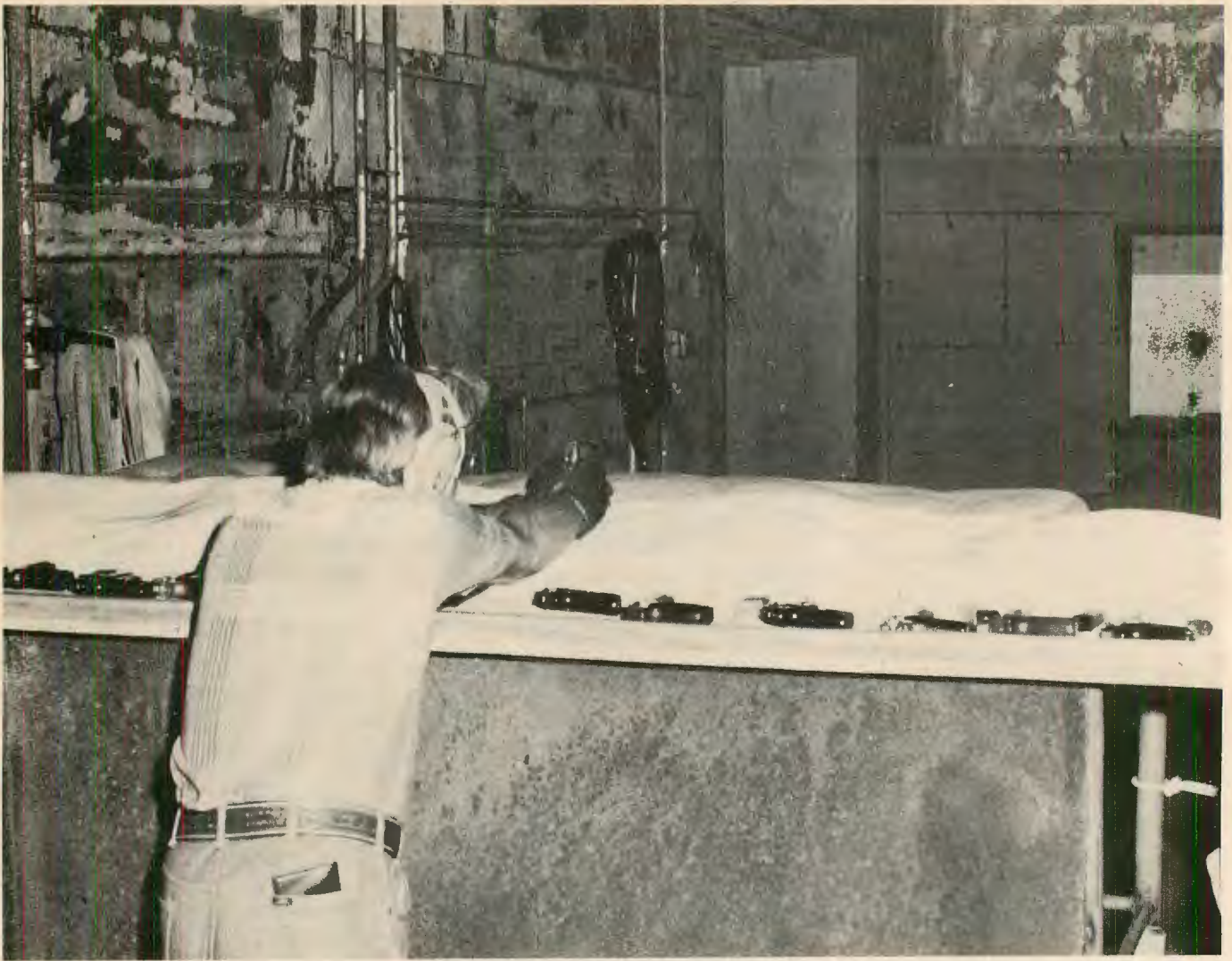
Robbins fielded a telephone call and continued, "On the other side of the coin, why do military personnel use .38 revolvers? Air crews of any service choose it because they feel there's a good chance they'll bang up an arm getting out of a chopper or jet in an emergency. By choosing the .38 over the .45, they have an ambidextrous weapon. And the M-15 also has a higher hit probability than the 1911A1 .45."

I didn't follow Robbins' thinking. He elaborated: "If we took a random sample of shooters and took them to the range and gave half of them M-15 revolvers and half .45 pistols, then had them swap guns, the revolver scores would be higher."

Robbins next talked about some of the venerable .45's problems. "The 1911A1 has a poor safety record. And, again, it lacks interoperability with NATO weapons. This lack is not just with NATO but with the free world. Almost everybody uses 9mm.

"And the .45 has a low hit probability. This is due to four problems. The weapon is inaccurate, has high recoil force, a heavy trigger pull and poor sights. Let's classify it as having medium firepower opposed to the revolver's low firepower.

"Logistics considerations for the .45 are also poor. The last buy was in 1945. They've all been rebuilt at least once and now they are at a point where it's not worthwhile to maintain them. Quantity on hand is insufficient to meet Army requirements.



ABOVE: Department of Army Civilian Bob Snodgrass test-shoots pistols in hot room. Temperature is 125 degrees F. Note gloves to prevent burns from hot metal. FAR LEFT, LEFT: Two 10-shot groups of new flat-nose ball of Davis-Robbins design through test barrel. These targets prove 9mm can be accurate at 50 yards. BELOW: Civilian Tom Wilkinson firing Beretta 92S-1 preproduction pistol.







Length.....	7.57 in.	192.28 mm
Height.....	6.75 in.	146.05 mm
Width.....	1.38 in.	35.05 mm
Grip		
Thickness.....	1.38 in.	35.05 mm
Width (front to rear), top.....	2.03 in.	51.56 mm
Width (front to rear), bottom.....	2.03 in.	51.56 mm
Trigger pull distance (Trigger to rear of grip)		
Single Action.....	2.55 in.	64.77 mm
Double Action.....	2.90 in.	73.66 mm
Sights		
Height—front sight.....	0.19 in.	4.83 mm
Width—front sight.....	0.12 in.	3.05 mm
Height—rear sight.....	0.25 in.	6.35 mm
Width—rear sight notch.....	0.12 in.	3.05 mm
Sight radius.....	5.72 in.	145.29 mm
Weight.....	1.78 lb.	807.41 gm
Trigger pull (average)		
Single Action.....	10.29 lb.	4667.54 gm
Double Action.....	19.21 lb.	8713.66 gm
Magazine		
Capacity, standard.....	14 rds.	
Weight, standard (empty).....	0.19 lb.	86.18 gm
Weight, standard (loaded).....	0.58 lb.	263.09 gm
Capacity, high-capacity.....	NA rds	
Weight, high-capacity (empty).....	NA lb.	NA gm
Weight, high-capacity (loaded).....	NA lb.	NA gm
Barrel		
Length.....	4.12 in.	104.65 mm
Number of lands & grooves.....	4	
Direction of twist.....	Right	
Twist rate.....	1 turn in 18 in.	457.20 mm



Length .....	7.85 in.	199.38 mm
Height .....	5.19 in.	131.83 mm
Width .....	1.38 in.	35.05 mm
<b>Grip</b>		
Thickness .....	1.38 in.	35.05 mm
Width (front to rear), top .....	1.75 in.	44.45 mm
Width (front to rear), bottom .....	1.97 in.	50.00 mm
<b>Trigger pull distance</b>		
(Trigger to rear of grip)		
Single Action .....	2.26 in.	57.40 mm
Double Action .....	2.56 in.	65.02 mm
<b>Sights</b>		
Height—front sight .....	0.14 in.	3.56 mm
Width—front sight .....	0.11 in.	2.79 mm
Height—rear sight .....	0.10 in.	2.54 mm
Width—rear sight notch .....	0.13 in.	3.30 mm
Sight radius .....	6.36 in.	161.54 mm
<b>Weight</b> .....	1.87 lb.	NA gm
<b>Trigger pull (average)</b>		
Single Action .....	5.52 lb.	2503.81 gm
Double Action .....	6.30 lb.	2857.68 gm
<b>Magazine</b>		
Capacity, standard .....	14 rds.	
Weight, standard (empty) .....	0.16 lb.	72.58 gm
Weight, standard (loaded) .....	0.55 lb.	249.48 gm
Capacity, high-capacity .....	NA rds	
Weight, high-capacity (empty) .....	NA lb.	NA gm
Weight, high-capacity (loaded) .....	NA lb.	NA gm
<b>Barrel</b>		
Length .....	4.74 in.	120.40 mm
Number of lands & grooves .....	6	
Direction of twist .....	Right	
Twist rate .....	10 in.	254.00 mm



Length.....	8.65 in.	219.71 mm
Height.....	5.39 in.	136.91 mm
Width.....	1.38 in.	35.05 mm
<b>Grip</b>		
Thickness.....	1.38 in.	35.05 mm
Width (front to rear), top.....	2.00 in.	50.80 mm
Width (front to rear), bottom.....	2.08 in.	52.83 mm
<b>Trigger pull distance</b>		
(Trigger to rear of grip)		
Single Action.....	3.50 in.	63.60 mm
Double Action.....	3.04 in.	77.22 mm
<b>Sights</b>		
Height—front sight.....	0.15 in.	3.81 mm
Width—front sight.....	0.13 in.	3.30 mm
Height—rear sight.....	0.21 in.	5.33 mm
Width—rear sight notch.....	0.12 in.	3.05 mm
Sight radius.....	6.28 in.	159.51 mm
Weight.....	2.27 lb.	1029.67 gm
<b>Trigger pull (average)</b>		
Single Action.....	4.42 lb.	2004.91 gm
Double Action.....	12.50 lb.	5670.00 gm
<b>Magazine</b>		
Capacity, standard.....	15 rds.	
Weight, standard (empty).....	0.20 lb.	90.72 gm
Weight, standard (loaded).....	0.61 lb.	276.70 gm
Capacity, high-capacity.....	NA rds	
Weight, high-capacity (empty).....	NA lb.	NA gm
Weight, high-capacity (loaded).....	NA lb.	NA gm
<b>Barrel</b>		
Length.....	4.31 in.	109.47 mm
Number of lands & grooves.....	6	
Direction of twist.....	Right	
Twist rate.....	14 in.	355.60 mm
	1 turn in	



Browning DA

Length .....	7.85 in.	199.38 mm
Height .....	5.19 in.	131.83 mm
Width .....	1.38 in.	35.05 mm
Grip		
Thickness .....	1.38 in.	35.05 mm
Width (front to rear), top .....	1.75 in.	44.45 mm
Width (front to rear), bottom .....	1.97 in.	50.00 mm
Trigger pull distance (Trigger to rear of grip)		
Single Action .....	2.40 in.	NA mm
Double Action .....	2.95 in.	NA mm
Sights		
Height—front sight .....	0.14 in.	3.56 mm
Width—front sight .....	0.11 in.	2.79 mm
Height—rear sight .....	0.10 in.	2.54 mm
Width—rear sight notch .....	0.13 in.	3.30 mm
Sight radius .....	6.36 in.	161.54 mm
Weight .....	1.87 lb.	NA gm
Trigger pull (average)		
Single Action .....	5.00 lb.	NA gm
Double Action .....	11.75 lb.	NA gm
Magazine		
Capacity, standard .....	14 rds.	
Weight, standard (empty) .....	0.16 lb.	72.58 gm
Weight, standard (loaded) .....	0.55 lb.	249.48 gm
Capacity, high-capacity .....	NA rds	
Weight, high-capacity (empty) .....	NA lb.	NA gm
Weight, high-capacity (loaded) .....	NA lb.	NA gm
Barrel		
Length .....	4.74 in.	120.40 mm
Number of lands & grooves .....	6	
Direction of twist .....	Right	
Twist rate .....	1 turn in 10 in.	254.00 mm

"On the other side of the ledger, the .45 has higher lethality and greater firepower than the .38 revolver. But the best feature is its excellent maintainability. This is true of any pistol, not just the .45.

"Conclusive lethality tests were done by the Army 10 or 15 years ago at Aberdeen. They compared 9mm ball with .45 ball and the results were not what you'd expect. The test itself is classified, but the conclusion is not. The bottom line is there is no appreciable difference in the amount of damage done to the body. And both are superior in lethality to the .38 Special."

I knew that our readers would have trouble with this information. I certainly did. It went against almost everything I'd experienced or read. What about knock-down power?

I asked Robbins if he was surprised by the test results. "No, because of my position, I had access to all the data, so I had no difficulty in accepting the results. The study was thorough and convincing. No handgun, including a .44 Magnum, is capable of guaranteed instant incapacitation. Only a brain or a spine shot will stop someone cold.

"Even a heart shot will not cause instant incapacitation every time. One person will roll over and do nothing when hit with a .22 rimfire while another can take a high power rifle round in the chest and continue to function for a short while.

"All things considered, the 9mm is the best bet for a handgun. We've got a smaller, lighter, lower recoiling cartridge that's doing the same job as a .45 and a much better job than the .38 ball."

Robbins is rolling now. Information's coming fast and hard. He's excited about his subject. He takes a couple of jabs at gun writers.

"Some gun writers frustrate me with their cavalier, know-it-all attitude. They assume that they know as much or more as people who spend their lives working with weapons. I'll grant that they don't have access to our classified tests, but this should make them humbler, if anything. To assume, for instance, that those who use gelatin as a test medium don't know what they're doing, is ludicrous. Those people weren't sitting around one day saying, 'Hey, we have to do some lethality tests.'

"How are we going to do it?"

"Well, we need something to shoot into."

"What'll we use?"

"I don't know. The commissary has a big sale on gelatin. Let's get a bunch of that and use it."

Robbins frowns. "So when I hear people say that gelatin tests are meaningless and don't relate to the real thing, I get angry. A lot of time went into developing a test medium as a substitute for live flesh. It can be correlated directly to wound damage in live people. The conclusive data showing the 9mm is as good



FROM LEFT: Air Force test participant, Mg. Ed. Bob Poos, Publisher Brown, author, Tom Wilkinson.

or better than the .45 were *not* based on gelatin. They were confirmed by it."

Then Robbins returned to the subject of knockdown power. "Knockdown power is a misnomer. If you want to knock someone down, in the sense that bowling pins are knocked down at a Second Chance match, forget it. You'd have to use a cartridge that would hit with enough momentum that, when you fire it, you would be knocked down too. Momentum is proportional to mass times velocity. It's so simple, I'm surprised more people don't realize it."

I was surprised too. Surprised that I had never applied high school physics to something so obvious. Newton's third law applies: for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.

Robbins then explained energy as it applies in an anti-personnel role. "What you're trying to do, since you can't knock people over like bowling pins, is create as much damage as you can. Stop the fight. Either they are killed outright or they are rendered incapable of continuing what they're doing. This is accomplished by damaging as much tissue as possible.

"In the case of 9mm vs. .45, the 9mm does as much or more tissue damage than the .45. The boys at the biophysics labs at Aberdeen or Edgewood can tell you exactly how. I just know the results. The .45 ACP leaves the muzzle with about 350 foot-pounds of energy. A commercial 9mm does about the same. Thus it becomes a question of how efficiently each deposits that energy to cause damage. Again it turns out, they're about the same; the 9mm even has a slight edge. A 9mm military loading, like a NATO round, leaves the muzzle with about 400 foot-pounds of energy, so there's no doubt that the .45 takes second place.

"Neither the 9 nor the .45 is as good as what we'd like. But with today's technology and the Geneva convention, it's the best we can do. I expect some work to be done in this area in the future. Perhaps

another type of killing mechanism altogether."

While we were discussing the future, I asked Robbins to look down the road 10 to 20 years. "We will probably look at entirely different concepts. Certainly different ammunition. The typical ball projectile that we've had since the first musket ball went flying, remains about the same. We have one or two things that look promising, but I don't want to elaborate on them.

"As far as lasers and that sort of thing, the energy requirements for them are so horrendous that we can't consider them until we develop an alternate energy source. I'm thinking more in terms of improving projectiles or aiming systems."

Just when I assumed the new 9mm side-arm was to be a panacea, Robbins unsettled me. "We're probably going to have to develop two handguns to meet all requirements. The reason is we need a standard-size service weapon and a small, concealable weapon.

"Military intelligence agents and CID personnel often need something smaller. They're willing to trade effectiveness for concealability. So after we develop a service pistol, we'll work on a smaller version. In both cases, a silencer will be included as part of the system. No modifications to the weapons will be necessary. This will necessitate two different rounds of 9mm. A standard round and one for use with silencers. It will probably use a heavier bullet and come out at subsonic velocity. We'll have to sacrifice on lethality here. The subsonic 9mm will be close to a .38."

Thus did Robbins neatly tie up the past, present and future of personal defense weapons. The future looks particularly bright if men like Robbins and colleague Davis remain in charge. Here are shooters, engineers and administrators all rolled into one. They use a fresh systems approach to design and development and allow the private sector to innovate. Which, after all, allows free enterprise to function at its best.

—N.E.M.

## INTERVIEW:

**A**T 50, Chief of Guns, Rockets and Explosives Division Dale M. Davis doesn't seem like an internationally recognized weapons expert. He's easy to talk to. He's helpful and explains technical details clearly, without being condescending.

Davis is an active shooter. And his 17-year-old daughter, Jean, also shoots. Davis recalls how she became interested in the sport: "About a year and a half ago, we were up at Jack's [Robbins] place shooting — practicing for the Second Chance match. She thought it looked like fun. She wanted to learn how to shoot and then accompany us to the match. So we got some guns and let her start shooting.

"Last Christmas I gave her a Colt Government Model. I modified it a little and coached her. We went to Second Chance again and she beat most of the other women there. I don't remember her overall score — somewhere around the halfway mark, I think. But that's pretty good considering the competition. It tickled me to watch her practice with the .45. When she began with it she weighed less than 100 pounds. A .45 is a bear to learn to shoot."

Born and raised in Morgantown, W. Va., Davis attended West Virginia University and attained a bachelor's of mechanical engineering in 1951. With only one semester in ROTC, he earned an Air Force commission along with his degree. He then spent 1½ years at Wright Patterson AFB near Dayton, Ohio, designing wind tunnel equipment as project engineer.

Davis was next assigned to the Army's Aberdeen Proving Ground as a test engineer in the small arms and aircraft weapons division. In 1954, he separated from the Air Force, traded his uniform for a business suit and stayed at the same job. In March, 1956, he transferred to the then Air Force Armament Center, Eglin AFB, Florida.

In 1966, Davis received his master's of engineering science degree from Florida State University at government expense.

He recalls: "The [Vietnam] war was gearing up then and when there is a war on, they see the need for guns. At peace, they think missiles will do it all. I worked on the GAU-8 (Gun, Aircraft Unit) in 1967. The A-10, 'Warthog,' was built around it and that's the only time in history a plane was built around a gun. It's a fine tank killer. The 30mm cannon fires 6,600-grain projectiles with a depleted uranium core. One nice feature about D.U. is it's highly pyrophoric, incendiary.

"In the early 1960s," Davis continues, "we were the first military organization to buy AR-15s. We liked the rifle and thought it would be a good replacement



Engineer Dale M. Davis.

for the M-2 carbine. We made a procurement buy of 20,000. But the Advance Research Projects Agency in Roslyn, Va., out-prioritized us and took our shipment away and sent it to S.E. Asia."

In 1970, Davis perfected plastic rotation bands for projectiles. He explains, "In 1954, the Navy had a fairly good nylon-6 rotating band for cannon projectiles. These bands are used because projectiles travel at velocities up to 4,000 FPS and because some carry explosives. Plastic or iron bands carry the projectile *on* the lands rather than *in* them." Davis hands me several projectiles to illustrate his point.

When I ask if this is similar to the plastic sabot used in Remington's Accelerator round, Davis smiles and says, "We paid for most of that research."

Davis' eyes sparkle, as he says, "I enjoyed developing the IMP in 1970. The damn thing's just so much fun to shoot. It's the most controllable automatic weapon I have shot. It has to do with the dynamics of using your arm instead of a stock to control the weapon."

Although a little preoccupied with a forthcoming trip to NATO countries, Davis still gives life to the saying, "He's forgotten more about weapons than you'll ever know." Since NATO is fence-sitting regarding the 9mm's future, he bringing "a pocketful" of his newly designed bullets to our allies so that they may draw their own conclusions.

It would be tragically ironic for the U.S. to retool for the 9mm only to have our European cousins go in another direction. But this danger seems remote. With Davis and Robbins' newly designed bullet and a reliable pistol from which to shoot it, NATO would be foolish to begin anew.

Davis' spacious office abounds with projectiles and cartridges of all sizes. Above his desk is a neatly dissected AK-47. A blackboard hangs near for in-

spiration. A two-inch piece of cold rolled steel, perforated by a 30mm round, gives mute testimony to the power of mass times velocity squared. Numerous working models await refinement. Others, like the IMP (marketed as the Bushmaster) have already been produced. Citations, diplomas, illustrations, awards and licenses cover the walls. Davis holds 12 patents.

When I finally request 9mm project specifics, Davis lets loose like he thought I'd never ask: "The .45 is a reasonable cartridge. It's fundamentally good. Military loads aren't necessarily optimum, but they'll do. The cartridge is bigger than need be."

Davis then discusses the .45 Colt's safety. "Every once in a while somebody in the military gets shot accidentally with a .45 because they go through the wrong sequence when clearing it. A gun that can't be cleared with the safety on is a bit ridiculous. When a soldier gets off guard duty, he goes to the armory to turn in his gun. And to clear it he has to kick off the safety. If there's any place you don't want to take off the safety, it's in the armory. But 70 years ago they didn't know any better and they made pistols that way.

"But don't get me wrong, in its day, there's no question, it was the finest pistol in the world. Fact is, it's about the only gun from that era that survived.

"In looking for a new gun and new ammunition, the logical thing was to take an existing, efficient, modern round and build a gun around it. And the NATO 9mm was it. Although there're a lot of people who will disagree, the data show otherwise.

"The 9mm is a good high-density cartridge. It's very efficient in volume, small in diameter and as lethal as need be. It works up around 38,000 pounds psi. It's one of the highest pressure pistol rounds available. If you were to look at the world's cartridges to determine which was logical, it's about as logical as any. And since NATO already uses it, it's particularly attractive.

"Another advantage, not commonly known, is that some pistols firing the NATO round will also fire 9mm Makarov [a Soviet cartridge slightly shorter than the NATO round].

"The main disadvantage of 9mm ball is its inaccuracy. If you look at projectile configuration, it looks like a scaled-down mini ball. It's very poor interior and exterior ballistic design." Davis forages in his desk drawer and produces a mini ball.

"Jack [Robbins] and I were evaluating the 9mm pistols. Jack noticed that ball ammunition's inaccuracy was so pronounced that we couldn't precisely measure pistol accuracy. The only 9mm having acceptable accuracy was commercial hollowpoint. Jack thought it was probably the ballistic shape rather than the concavity that accounted for the improved accuracy. Then we debated whether it

was ballistic shape or mass property.

"Our ballisticians derived equations that predict first maximum yaw and dispersion of projectile based on measured aerodynamic properties. We were then able to make design changes and predict exactly what the bullet's dispersion pattern would be.

"So I conferred with Jack and we used those ballistic equations on the 9mm bullet. And it worked; the 9mm bullet can be very accurate. We made a patent disclosure to the Air Force and it is being processed, so I won't go into details. That'll be generally available when the application is processed. I wouldn't want it printed in a magazine right now. It's a simple matter of getting the aerodynamic coefficients and mass properties in proper relationship. As it happens, the 9mm ball projectile was just about as wrong as it's possible to design it.

"We shrank the target somewhere between eight and 10 inches, for 10-shot groups at 50 yards, to less than one inch at the same distance. And there's no reason why, if the test equipment is sensitive enough, all the projectiles can't go through the same hole at 50 yards.

"Hornady produces a .45 flat-nosed bullet in accordance with our drawings. They call it a jacketed truncated cone, because geometrically that's what it is. It's better than .45 ball, but not so good as 9mm. I don't know exactly why; I haven't checked the mass properties and symmetry. It might be the diameter-to-length ratio."

Until Davis' colleagues developed their ballistic equation two years ago, bullet designers had done their work by trial and error. As a result, absurd myths are circulating today about bullet shape. For example, hollowpoints are more accurate because they are hollowpoints; concave bullet bases aid accuracy; boat-tail bullets are more accurate, etc.

Davis then discusses lethality: "The statement that bigger is better is just like apple pie and Coca Cola in this country. Everything from cars to guns — bigger's better. That's American philosophy. Not necessarily so though when you're talking about doing a particular job. I can't go into details, for security reasons, but Army tests show that a 9mm is just as lethal as a .45.

"A round's lethality is not determined by its diameter, velocity or penetration. It boils down to the rate at which the bullet deposits energy in a target. That can be illustrated by the 5.56mm versus the old caliber .30. If a .30 cal. will go through three or four men lined up in ranks, it doesn't necessarily do a great deal of damage to the first man in the line, whereas, if the 5.56 stops in the first and dumps all its energy in that target, it's more lethal. And the 9mm is more likely to dump its energy in the target without passing through it. Any energy left in a bullet after penetrating a target is useless.



Managing Ed. Bob Poos absorbs recoil of test pistol.

"Let's say there are two cartridges having identical energy, and they are fired at a target one foot thick. If one penetrates clear to the back and the other stops halfway through, the one stopping halfway imparts more immediate trauma because it deposits energy more densely."

I ask Davis what he thinks will be happening 20 years from now in the firearms field: "You'll see ammunition that can be made more cheaply. You'll see brass, which is scarce, give way to aluminum and steel cartridge cases. Instead of copper bullet jackets, you'll probably find plastic. This will save money and prolong barrel life. You'll probably see guns that require less maintenance than in the past. The military will get rid of revolvers. And the police will use fewer of them. I think when major arms manufacturers in this country begin to produce some fine, reliable, modern semi-automatic pistols, you'll see revolvers disappear."

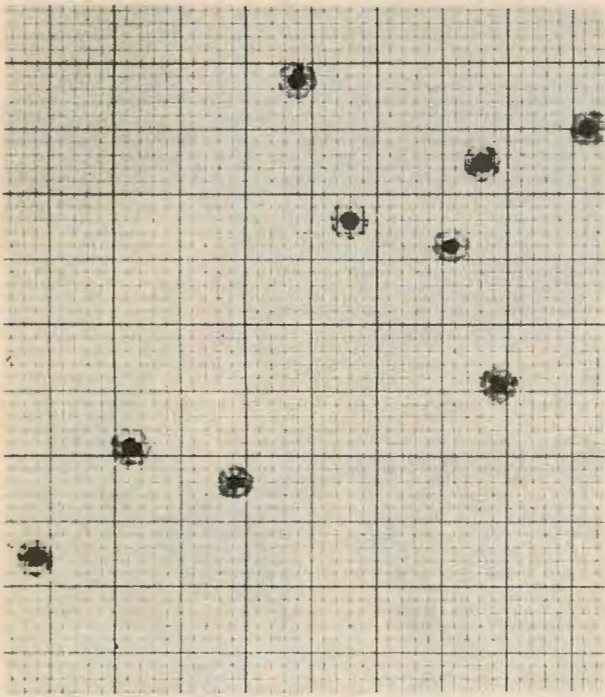
When asked about non-ballistic weapons such as lasers, masers and particle beams, Davis smiles: "I don't see them in any reasonable time frame. It goes back

to the matter of transmitting energy. Whether it's electrical energy, ballistic energy or simply hitting the guy on the head with a hammer, the energy required to do damage is probably about the same. Right now a modern conventional cartridge is very efficient."

What about Soviet small arms? Davis likes them: "The Kalashnikovs, the whole AK series, are ingenious weapons. Kalashnikov does some interesting things in order to assure reliability. There is plenty of margin in the springs and weightier parts. He has grooves and reliefs placed all through the weapon. There's even a dirt groove in the cartridge base. The guns and ammo can be full of dirt and sand and still function."

We'll hear more from Davis. His agile mind continually refines and modifies present and future projects. He has related some of these off-the-record. We hope to receive permission to publish them in the near future.

— N.E.M.



ABOVE: Standard military M1 ball through test barrel at 50 yards. Heavy squares are one inch, light squares are .1 inch. RIGHT: Tech. Sgt. Ernest F. Decker, 33, reloads Beretta 92S-1. Note dropping of spent magazine. BELOW: Ragged hole was cut by 100 rounds of flat-nose ball through test barrel at 50 yards.







**ABOVE:** Test pistols must function in cold room's minus 60 degrees F. This hurdle alone eliminated some contenders.  
**BELOW:** Test pistols undergo mud bath in cement mixer. Afterwards they must shoot (minor manual assistance is allowed).



# APOCALYPSE NOW:

## A Review of the Movie



**F**ROM a Cambodian jungle base camp the renegade Col. Kurtz, former operations officer of 5th Special Forces, transmits his recurring nightmare in a hauntingly tortured voice: "I watch a snail — crawling across the edge — of a razor — and surviving."

This too is the dilemma of Francis Coppola's epic *Apocalypse Now*. It crawls and occasionally races across a vast panorama which Coppola hopes will impart "a sense of the horror, the madness, the sensuousness and the moral dilemma of the Vietnam War." The film also survives — but sometimes just barely.

Still, *Apocalypse Now* should not be missed. It is a visually beautiful film that deals with the conflicts of man's moral

decisions. And, while it regresses into fantasy and surrealism, it remains exciting and entertaining.

### Coppola's vision of truth.

Throughout the film, however, Coppola's unrelenting personal view of "what the truth was" seethes just beneath the surface and frequently churns into the open. It is his view that the Soviet news agency Tass called "brutally true." Vietnam combat vets will not recognize Coppola's "truth."

The film opens in a Saigon hotel room. Capt. Benjamin Willard (Martin Sheen), assigned to SOG from the 173rd Airborne Brigade, struggles to wake up. In his

groggy stupor the noise of the ceiling fan blends with the beating of chopper blades. He is waiting, becoming desperate with inactivity.

It is not Willard's first tour, and for the veteran captain home now exists only as one side of a tearing conflict. "It was worse at home," he says. "I'd wake up and there would be nothing." Now, he waits for a mission.

The mission comes and Willard, wearing his Bloody Sword combat and Recon-do patches, reports for orders.

Here he learns about Col. Kurtz (Marlon Brando) who has disappeared with a fanatically loyal Montagnard army and is somewhere in Cambodia fighting the war in his own way, independent of

# BONANZA OR BOMB?

by Tony Bliss, Jr.



the U.S. command. Kurtz, Willard is told, had been formally charged with murder for ordering the execution of four high-ranking double agents.

This incident, though exaggerated, is based on the actual arrest in 1969 of 5th Special Forces commander Col. Robert B. Rheault for ordering the elimination of a double agent in Nha Trang. The charges against Rheault were later dropped.

### “Terminate with prejudice.”

Capt. Willard is ordered to proceed by a Navy river patrol boat upriver into Cambodia to “terminate the Colonel with extreme prejudice.” Kurtz is believed to be insane, says the briefing general. And Willard — at least for now — agrees.

As the boat heads through the South China Sea toward the river, Capt. Willard begins to have doubts about his mission to kill an American officer. “Charging a man with murder in this place is like handing out speeding tickets at the Indy 500,” he says.

The Navy crew is about as unprofessional as can be imagined — hop heads all, except for the chief. One is an acid-dropping champion surfer, one a sauce chef from New Orleans and another a stoned cool cat from a ghetto. As the patrol boat moves on with the surfer water skiing behind and the rest of the crew getting stoned, Willard studies his dossier on Kurtz.

Kurtz is a professional — third generation West Point, highly decorated and educated with all the right assignments behind him. After his first Vietnam tour in '64 as an adviser, his report was restricted. He then requested jump school twice, finally threatening to resign before they gave it to him. Airborne at age 38? Why? asks Willard. Kurtz joined Special Forces in '66 even though it meant he would never make general. What did he see? asks Willard.

As Willard's respect and intrigue with Kurtz grow so too does his disgust for the crew.

The patrol boat, which was an actual Vietnamese craft that had escaped to Thailand, hooks up with the 1st of the 9th, 1st Air Cav. Division. The Cavalry will secure the river mouth as the boat enters, and here Coppola really begins to blow the film so far as realism is concerned.

That night, after securing a Viet Cong village, the Cavalry settles down to a “beach party” with T-bone steaks, cases of beer and dozens of campfires — a scene to make an NVA mortarman's dream. The incredibly manic battalion commander Lt. Col. Kilgore (get that — killgore) — played by Robert Duvall — sits by a fire, strums his guitar and talks of his passion — surfing.

Again we see Willard's disdain as he looks on. Certainly, the luxuries flown in to the field for some units typifies an



American approach to war that could come in for some honest criticism. But Coppola's fanciful rendition is overdone to such an extent as to become ludicrous — surreal or not.

### Choppers and surfboards.

At dawn the troops saddle up for an air assault on the VC village blocking the river mouth. The choppers fill the sky as a bugle blows the cavalry charge.

It is a beautiful sight and the sound of the beating chopper blades are enough to make any Vietnam grunt's adrenalin flow. By the time the choppers are barreling in at wave-top level for a beach landing, the adrenalin will be pumping hard. And, as the ocean breakers zip below and the troops lock and load and get ready to leap off the struts, you'll feel like you were right back in 'Nam on the way into a hot LZ.

The scene is so good that you can even





forgive Coppola for the surfboards strapped to the choppers and "The Ride of the Valkyries" from a Wagner opera blaring from a special loudspeaker system on the command chopper. "Scares hell out of the slopes," says Kilgore.

But, then, the first sight we see is the school house. Out comes the school marm clad in her white *ao dai* and pointing to the sky, followed by dozens of neatly uniformed kids. They flee the American onslaught. The Russians must have loved that Coppola-inspired scene.

Gunships rake the village with rockets and a medevac chopper taking out wounded is blown up with a grenade hidden by a Viet woman. A Loach is shot down, but not before it hovers over the fleeing woman and her companions and zaps them with M-16 fire.

Unfortunately, the assault has a lot of weak points. Gunship rockets that trail white smoke sputter out of pods that belong on O-2s. Troops with shiny new camouflage helmet covers are so slow getting out of some Hueys that the skids actually hit the ground first.

But the clincher is when Col. Kilgore's chopper, its nose emblazoned with "Death from Above," lands on a spit of beach amid the whirling of three different colors of smoke grenades (Coppola loves smoke grenades).

The bigger-than-life Kilgore then stands unflinching as incoming mortar rounds pepper the beach. He orders two men to fight or surf. And so, they surf as the battle rages. (We did a lot of surfing in 'Nam during firefights, didn't we!)



Continued on page 71

# BLACK BERETS

## Analysis of Soviet Naval Infantry Today

by Charles Brandon Elliott

**A**LTHOUGH the term "marine" does not exist in the Russian language, the designation "*Morskaya Pekhota*" (naval infantry) is used by the Soviets to describe present units organized and trained for the conduct of amphibious warfare. In its English language translations, the Soviet Defense Ministry prefers use of the term "marine" over that of "naval infantry" as a more accurate description of this elite arm reactivated by Admiral of the Fleet Sergei G. Gorshkov by 1964.

### IDENTIFYING THE BLACK BERETS

While the uniform of the "Black Beret" is meant to be distinctive in appearance and to contribute to the feeling of elitism, it represents a combination of the uniform worn by the Soviet sailor and the Soviet soldier. The Soviet marine field uniform is black fatigues with a "bush" type blouse. Calf-length, black leather boots are standard footwear. Each marine wears a black leather belt whose buckle bears the insignia of the fleet to which he is assigned (i.e., Northern Fleet, Baltic Fleet, Black Sea Fleet or Pacific Fleet).

When steel helmets are worn, a five-pointed star is often outlined on the front of the helmet and an anchor insignia inside a broken circle is stenciled on its side. In field operations, the helmet is often covered by camouflaged cloth similar to that of the "bush" jacket. At the bend of the left sleeve, there is a small circular patch with an anchor emblem. The neck of the fatigue jacket is worn open, displaying the characteristic blue and white striped tee shirt. In non-assault opera-

tions, the black beret with a red star on front and an anchor insignia on the left is normally worn instead of the steel helmet.

### SOVIET MARINE ORGANIZATION

Soviet naval infantry strength is now approaching 17,500 officers and men who are organized into five marine brigades, each consisting of three motorized rifle battalions (amphibious), a battalion of 31 PT76 light amphibious tanks, a self-propelled anti-aircraft artillery battalion of 18 ZSU23-4 quad 23mm guns, a company of M8 Gecko anti-aircraft rocket launchers, a marine engineer company, a brigade communications company and other support units. Each Soviet fleet has a naval infantry brigade, which may soon be increased to two per fleet.

A Soviet marine battalion, the basic amphibious assault unit, includes three amphibious motorized rifle companies, each consisting of a five-man company headquarters, three rifle platoons, and a small 10-man machine-gun platoon consisting of three 7.62mm-PK-rifle-caliber general-purpose machine guns. Each marine motorized rifle company is transported by eight BTR60PB amphibious armored personnel carriers (two per rifle platoon, one for the MG platoon, and one for company headquarters). Each Soviet marine battalion also includes a battalion headquarters and a battalion mortar battery of 55 officers and men and six 120mm mortars. In battalion amphibious assault training exercises, a company of PT76 tanks (10 tanks, three per platoon plus the CO's tank) is normally



attached to the battalion from the brigade tank company.

In recent months, a helicopter company has been assigned to each of the five naval infantry brigades for airmobile operations in coordination with assault landings. These helicopter companies are assigned missions of air-to-ground fire support and of transporting heliborne marines to inland landing zones where link-up with APC-borne marines is expected within 2 hours.

### BLACK BERET ARMAMENT

Black Beret armament is basically the same as that of Soviet motorized rifle units. Each marine rifle squad is armed with one Kalashnikov light machine gun (RPK), mounted on a bipod and equipped with either a 40-round curved box magazine or a 75-round drum magazine, and one RPG7V anti-tank launcher. Each squad rifleman is armed with a 7.62mm AKM assault rifle (the Russians prefer the term sub-machine gun). BTR60PB APC drivers are armed with AKMS assault rifles (an AKM with a folding-type metal stock). Rifle squad leaders and platoon



ABOVE: An important part of Soviet military training: regular and complete political briefings — even in the field. BELOW: East bloc commanders get together for consultation on integrated fleet operations in northern European waters. Photos: Tass from Sovfoto.

leaders are also armed with AKM assault rifles.

The AKM assault rifle is an improvement of the older AK-47, and has been lightened. Its sighting range has been increased from 800 meters to 1,000 meters and its knife-bayonet, used instead of the originally provided bayonet, can cut energized barbed wire. The AKM uses a stamped-steel receiver, a ribbed receiver cover, and a cyclic-rate reducer. AKM cyclic rate of fire is 600 rounds per minute. Usable rate of fire at automatic is 90 rounds per minute and semi-automatic is 40 rounds per minute. The AKM and AKMS use a 30-round detachable box-type magazine. Soviet "Black Berets" have been well trained in marksmanship and techniques of fire and can be expected to perform much better than Angolan MPLA soldiers equipped with AK-47s.

Soviet marine battalions also employ mobile sniper teams equipped with the 7.62mm (M1908 rimmed rifle cartridge) SVD Dragunov sniper rifle. The Dragunov has replaced the older M1891/30 Moisin-Nagant bolt-action



sniper rifles. The SVD sniper rifle is semi-automatic and is equipped with a 10-round detachable box type magazine. It uses the PSO1 four-power optical telescopic sight with rubber eyepiece, integral rangefinder, battery-powered reticle illuminator, and infrared sighting for night sniper use. The muzzle has a flash suppressor and a recoil compensator to hold the barrel near the target. Its effective combat range is 800 meters. The SVD uses the same ammunition as the PK and PKS light machine guns (a PKS is a vehicle-mounted PK LMG).

#### TRAINING FOR THE BLACK BERETS

Training for the Black Berets is described as rugged and is backed by intensive Communist political indoctrination. They undertake the same training as Soviet motorized infantry, plus appropriate naval training. Major General P. Melnikov, writing in the *Soviet Military Review*, describes Soviet marine training as follows:

Their training programme includes sea, amphibious, field, fire and psychological training. The marines study ship design, they take part in damage control drills, embarkation, loading and unloading of supplies and equipment, and in different kinds of landing drills.

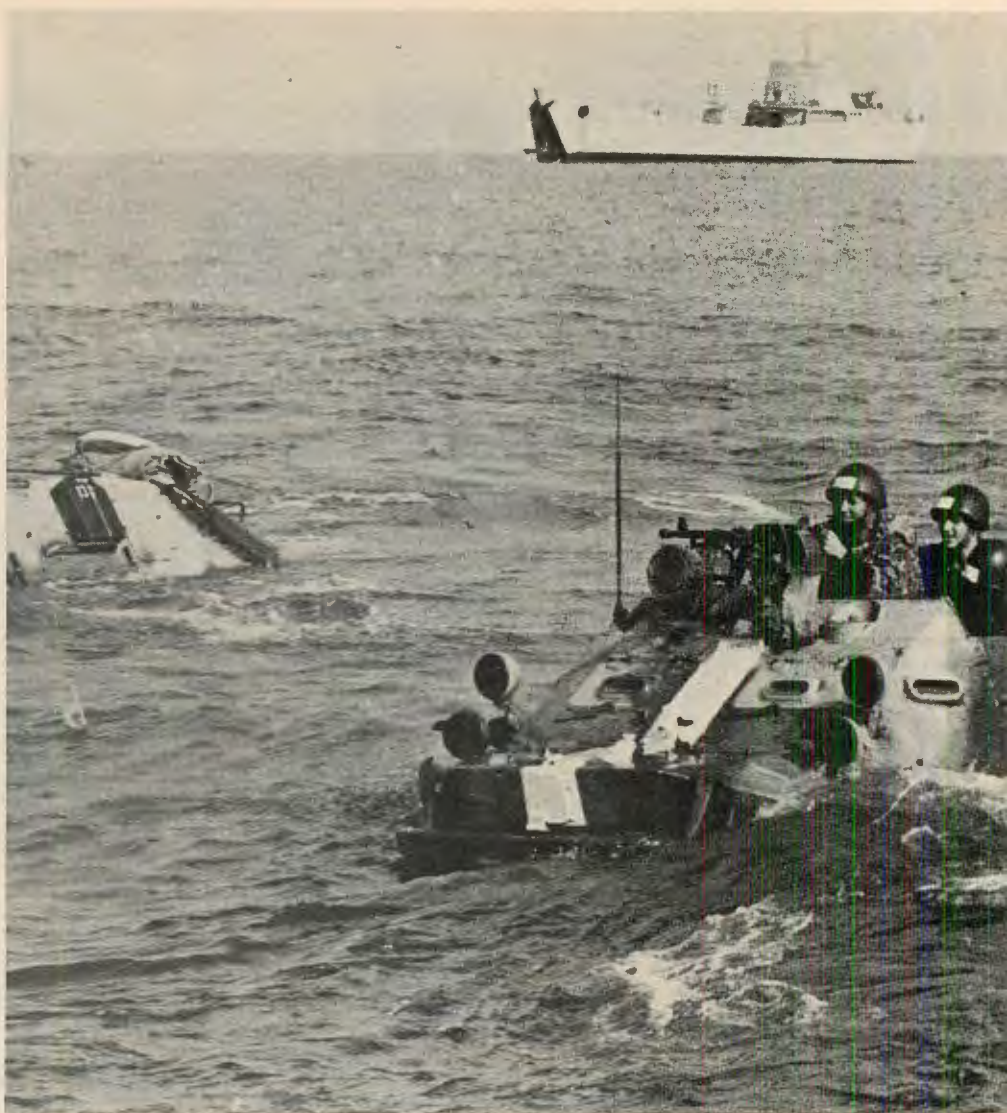
The marines frequently act in cooperation with the land forces and airborne troops. The marines help the other arms to master the secrets of fighting for a landing, while the other arms show the marines how to fight the enemy effectively ashore.

Experience of past wars has shown that the marines often have to operate either in small groups or even singly. That is why each of them has to master the art of initiative in combat, and silent, concealed observation of the enemy.

A most complicated form of training is an amphibious landing in which all the officers and men of the unit participate with all the standard equipment. Such exercises may be conducted either in daylight or in darkness under any weather conditions with a host of other complications. The landing and the battle waged by the force ashore are practised on different types of ground, including difficult terrain. In the course of the operation the marines are often required to fire all types of weapons. These operations are also used for working out troop control.

As soon as they land the marines fight like ordinary infantry. That is why it is necessary for them persistently to master all the elements of field training and to become skilled in waging all-arms combat. During a landing operation, the marines may run into superior enemy forces, a deliberate antilanding defence organized in depth with a system of engineer obstacles and concealed fire weapons in standby position. To overcome enemy opposition it will naturally be necessary to soften up the antilanding defences by support from ships' weapons and air attacks. The marines must be able to execute a dashing attack immediately after the barrage fire, to commit tanks and artillery without delay, to outflank the most formidable strong points on the coast and in the depth of the defence system, to strike at the flanks and the rear of the antilanding defence system and to effect landings on difficult ground.

In a training battle the first to land on the "enemy" shore were the combat engineers. They were landed from helicopters and high speed boats under cover of ships' fire, bomber and fighter-bomber attacks. This time the job of the combat engineers was to clear passages in the system of obstacles for the infantry and tanks. Then a group of frogmen went into the water through the cleared passages. In a short while they neutralised the antilanding mines planted by the "enemy" and marked with buoys the



TOP: Soviet marines in steel helmets make an amphibious assault. LST "Alligator" in the background, BTR60PB APCs in foreground. ABOVE: Red bannered Pacific Fleet lands amphibious troops. RIGHT: Company Commander leads the unit in beach attack. Photos: Tass from Sovfoto.





channels for the approach of the landing ships and craft. The actions of the combat engineers and frogmen were covered by submachine guns, grenade launcher operators and amphibious tanks that had been sent with them in the same assault wave.

As soon as the channels were cleared in the water and obstacles breached ashore, the tanks, armoured personnel carriers with men, and other fighting vehicles lowered from the landing ships and craft made for the shore. Exerting pressure on the "enemy" they carried the attack into the depth of his defence system towards an airborne unit that had been dropped in the rear of the antilanding defence system.

#### PHYSICAL TRAINING

Physical training in the Soviet marines is emphasized as part of individual training and unit training to achieve a high standard of physical and mental conditioning. Soviet Defense Ministry doctrine states that to emerge victorious in battle the marine must be proficient in the use of all kinds of small arms, know how to perform a landing, be skilled at throwing hand grenades and fighting with the bayonet and knife, competent at sambo wrestling (unarmed self-defense), capable of swimming with a full load, able to negotiate various obstacles, plus being brave and strong.

To accomplish those goals, Black Beret physical training is emphasized during routine unit training. Forty percent of the physical training program is devoted to sambo wrestling, bayonet drill and the techniques of knife attack. Physical training of the Soviet marine officer is identical to that of the enlisted marine.

#### MILITARY SPORTS COMPLEX

Soviet marines are required to undergo training in the "Military Sports Complex" (MSC) and master the MSC skills. These include five obligatory events: making a giant half-circle on the horizontal bar at least six times; a 100-meter sprint in service uniform in 14.2 seconds; a one-kilometer cross-country rush in 3½ minutes; a 75-meter swim in uniform with AKM assault rifle in one minute and 50 seconds; and a six-kilometer cross-country rush in 32 minutes or a 10-kilometer ski race in 54 minutes. Every Soviet marine taking the MSC test must perform two floor exercises, earn at least a "good" mark in sambo wrestling, have at least a second class rating in some Olympic or other sport, and have participated in five official competitions. Under these conditions a Soviet marine can receive the first grade "Athlete Serviceman" badge.

Not all Soviet marines are volunteers, as draftees with high prerequisite standards are often assigned to the naval infantry brigades. All marine units are "guards" units subject to constant elitist indoctrination. Major General Melnikov describes the Black Berets as follows:

The marines are characterised by such qualities as ideological conviction, staunchness, endurance, agility, marksmanship, skill in handling bayonet and grenades, ability to entrench themselves quickly, ability to find their bearings on unfamiliar ground both by day and by night, to negotiate obstacles, to camouflage and to fight tanks.



This calls for selection of special personnel for the marines. As a rule, physically fit men with high moral standards are picked. Soviet marines are known for their dauntless daring and specifically naval valour in battle, staunchness in defence and vigour in the assault, boldness, resourcefulness, defiance of danger and even death. The names of the most distinguished marines have been recorded forever in the annals of the Great Patriotic War [World War II].

Today the marines are a highly mobile, superbly equipped arm of the Soviet Navy. Whereas in the last war they were equipped mainly with small arms, they are now outfitted with tanks, different artillery mounts, armoured personnel carriers and other fighting vehicles which form the basis of their might as an arm of the service. This enables the marines to wage combat on equal terms with a strong enemy and accomplish missions as a landing force.

As the Black Berets hit the beach, all give the traditional shout of the Russian marines, "*Polundra!*" which means roughly, "Watch Out Below!" November 16 of each year is celebrated as the Soviet marine birthday. On this date in 1705, Czar Peter the Great, the first Russian advocate of amphibious warfare, organized the first 10 companies of marines.



Soviet marine T55 disembarks from the jaws of an "Alligator" class LST. Photo: Tass from Sovietto.

## SOVIET NAVAL SUPPORT

Soviet naval support for the Black Berets includes over 12 "Alligator" class 5,800-ton LSTs, over 60 "Polnocny" class 1,000-ton LCTs, 35 "Vydra" class 500-ton LCVs, and 46 additional older amphibious landing craft. The 40,000-ton *Kiev* aircraft carrier (termed an antisubmarine cruiser by the Soviets), commanded by Captain 1st Rank Y. Sokolov, can easily carry a battalion of Soviet marines. The *Kiev*, plus the helicopter carriers *Moskva* and *Leningrad* of 15,000 tons each, have now given a global capability to the deployment of Soviet marines. Soviet naval landing ships in the Red Sea provided logistical support for Cuban mercenaries and Marxist Ethiopian troops by delivering supplies to Ethiopian Red Sea ports during recent fighting against Somali and Eritrean rebels.

## SOVIET NAVAL DEPLOYMENT

The Soviet Northern Fleet, commanded by Admiral G. M. Yegorov, periodically dispatches naval task forces, including landing ships, south through the Iceland-Norway gap to Cuba and Angola. The Soviet marine brigade organic to the Northern Fleet has specialized in night amphibious landings and assault landings in dense fog.

The Soviet Baltic Fleet, commanded by Admiral V. V. Mikhalin, cooperates closely with Polish and East German naval units. Ships of the Baltic Fleet have made repeated intrusions into Danish and Swedish territorial waters. The Soviet marine brigade organic to the Baltic Fleet has staged maneuvers with the Polish amphibious Sea Assault Division.

The Soviet Pacific Fleet, commanded by Admiral V. P. Maslov, is increasing its activities off Japan and has sent task forces into the Indian Ocean, including small contingents of marines. The Soviet marine brigade organic to the Pacific Fleet maintains contingency plans for amphibious assault landings to be conducted against Red China in event of a Sino-Soviet war.

The Soviet Black Sea Fleet, commanded by Admiral N. I. Khovrin, maintains the Mediterranean Squadron, commanded by Vice Admiral Vladimir Akimov aboard the squadron flagship *Admiral Golovko*, a Kynda class cruiser. At times, the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron numbers more ships than the U.S. Sixth Fleet. Landing ships with Soviet marines have become part of this squadron. The Soviet marine brigade organic to the Black Sea Fleet can easily be deployed in the Mediterranean or off Africa's east coast.

## SOVIET NAVAL FIRE SUPPORT

Soviet naval doctrine on amphibious landings calls for combined operations to be conducted by naval, land, air and airborne landing forces which perform a maneuver on the sea with the object of seizing an area or objectives on an enemy-held coast and ensuring a speedy advance

on land. In the Soviet marine landing zone, the naval force is subdivided into naval attack groups of distant, close, and immediate fire support.

The Soviet naval attack group of distant fire support will neutralize targets in the depth of its opponent's tactical defense zone. In this group is included missile carrying motor-boats to increase the number of targets attacked.

The Soviet naval attack group of close support will consist mainly of rocket bombardment ships, designed to destroy hostile manpower in strong points, reserves, fire weapons and other equipment in positions and assembly areas.

The Soviet naval attack group of immediate support will mainly consist of motor-boats designed for various purposes, which will destroy or neutralize visible fire weapons, artillery pieces or mortars which have resumed fire or which hitherto have not been neutralized. The guns of the boats will fire at tanks, self-propelled guns and other fire weapons which offer opposition to the landing force. Motor-boats equipped with rocket launchers are to deal with hostile manpower and weapons and are to destroy hostile centers of resistance.

## BLACK BERETS WITH NUCLEAR TEETH

The Kremlin is almost daily being encouraged to take on new military adventure with the Republic of South Africa as its ultimate objective.

If the Soviet Black Berets are used as an intervention force against the Republic of South Africa, there is a bit of information classified by the Kremlin as "Top Secret" that every SOFer and American volunteer should know regarding their "special equipment." Soviet marine engineers are reliably reported to be trained in the employment and firing of atomic demolition munitions (ADMs) which may be used under given conditions against material-type targets to destroy massive structures such as port facilities, air fields, bridges, etc. Soviet ADMs can be detonated "on call" by wire-firing or radio-firing. Use of tactical ADMs have given the Soviet Black Berets a set of nuclear teeth.

In the conduct of "special operations," Soviet marines have also been trained to work in liaison with KGB-directed partisan forces. Specially designed manpack ADMs for partisan use have been in the Soviet nuclear inventory since as early as 1965. One is a single packet approximately 18 inches in length and weighing about 70 pounds, with a yield of .10 Kt. Another type consists of two packages, each weighing approximately 80 pounds, with an assembly time of 25 minutes. This larger ADM has a yield of .5 Kt.

The use of partisan man-portable ADMs by the Soviets was first reported in the authoritative British *Intelligence Digest* in November, 1965 (The KGB Par-

tisan Directorate). Technical improvements have undoubtedly been made during the past 14 years.

## TARGET: SOUTH AFRICA

On 31 December 1978, South-West Africa (SWA), also known as Namibia, secured its independence from the RSA. The Walvis Bay enclave, however, is being retained by the RSA on the basis that it was part of Cape Colony when merged into the Union of South Africa in 1910. The Kremlin and its front group, SWAPO (South West African People's Organization), have different plans for Walvis Bay. Sam Nujoma, SWAPO's Marxist self-professed "president," has already requested Soviet aid, if necessary, in reducing the Walvis Bay enclave.

Walvis Bay is the only modern seaport on the South West coast, where it is described as a "maritime oasis." It is on the Skeleton Coast where the natural sand dunes of the Namib Desert, enforced with sand-resistant fences, are among the highest in the world. The greatest asset and main source of revenue of this remarkable port is the excellent fishing supply which has provided Walvis Bay with one of the world's largest fishing industries. These are eight Pilchard factories, partly owned by Del Monte, the American food processing corporation. Due to its relative isolation, and as a natural stepping stone toward the RSA proper, some intelligence analysts view the Walvis Bay enclave as an ideal target for Soviet intervention by a show piece marine amphibious operation.

Speaking from SWAPO headquarters in Luanda, Angola, Moses Garoeb, its administrative secretary, has stated that SWAPO guerrillas will fight to the bitter end to "prevent the annexation of Walvis Bay to the Republic of South Africa."

Moscow has repeatedly charged that the RSA is operating a uranium concentration plant and nuclear reactors capable of producing raw material for military purposes. It claims that the RSA will soon be able to produce enough plutonium for 100 atomic bombs a year. The Soviet Defense Ministry has charged that the RSA has supplied Israel with uranium, steel and coal, and provided South African fliers who flew on the Israeli side during the October 1973 war. Kremlin militarists have publicly termed the relationship between Israel and the RSA as a "dangerous union" and may justify Soviet military intervention inside the RSA on these and other grounds. If the Russian bear decides on intervention in South Africa, the Soviet Black Berets will lead the way.



# CUSS & DISCUSS

Our publication of "Bobby Garwood: Traitor or Victim?" (September '79) has raised a lot of flak. "Cuss and Discuss" is a new supplement to FLAK that lets our readers speak out at length on specific articles we've run and servicemen to comment and give suggestions on our current military establishment.—The Eds.

## TRAITOR TO "HERO" ...

Sirs:  
As an Army retiree with 22-plus years of service, including two tours in Vietnam (65-66 w/1st Cav. Div. and 68-69 w/Americal Div.) and a native of Greensburg, Indiana, I find myself in the midst of a bewildering dilemma — the remolding of an accused traitor as a "local hero." The case in point is that of Marine PFC (E-2) Robert Garwood who also calls Greensburg his hometown.

After three separate unpublished and unanswered — although totally objective and non-slandering — letters to the editor of the local newspaper, a veritable deluge of "copyright" stories and posed pictures was halted. Unfortunately, the molding of Garwood's "new image" was launched, first by his clever civilian attorney who orchestrated an "I love you, America" initial statement through local press coverage, portraying him as a sensitive, Bible-carrying Marine who served his country. Many compare him to the cowardly draft dodger (a simple civil offense) to justify his being pardoned.

What the media have failed to publicize are the facts about Robert Garwood as previously chronicled by Zalin Grant in *Survivors*, which exposed Garwood's North Vietnam National Liberation Front rank (1st lieutenant) and name (Huynh Chien Dao, meaning brave liberation fighter), and John Hubbell's *P.O.W.*, describing Garwood, by name, as "big, nice-looking, well-fed Bobby Garwood was hard to believe, but he was real, a living breathing traitor who had taken up arms on behalf of the enemy and had no compunctions about helping to hold American troops in vile captivity." A third book, written by Monika Schwinn and Bernhard Diehl, two German nurses who survived four years' captivity, entitled *We Came to Help*, has an entire chapter, "The Deserter," devoted to Garwood.

Because of our concern that the president, as commander-in-chief, might be pressured into thwarting the due process of our military judicial system — by people mesmerized by the phony, orchestrated, image-remaking process of his attorney, aided by the media — a group of us locally have organized to work for truth and justice in the Garwood case.

We offer to finance the administration of a polygraph examination of Garwood and cite noted attorney F. Lee Bailey's book, *The Defense Never Rests*, as a heavy authority supporting the use of a polygraph in learning truth.

We feel that Garwood may have information about other living Americans in Vietnam and that any negotiating by him for clemency in exchange for his information would be blackmail of the highest, most despicable order.

We are seeking this national support so that the president might be informed of our unified position for him not to intervene but let the Marine Corps take care of their own. Our address for support or comments is:

Dale Hurst  
VC (Veterans Committee) to  
Assure Justice  
P.O. Box 252  
Greensburg, IN 47240

## DOCUMENTATION ...

Sirs:  
Congrats to Chris Doyle on his fine piece on Robert Garwood. I'm glad to see SOF had the balls to present that side of the story which the media have consistently ignored or glossed over.

In addition to the book, *Survivors*, which Doyle mentions in his article, SOF readers might be interested in knowing that there are at least three other books which further document Garwood's role as an active Viet Cong collaborator:

*P.O.W. — A Definitive History of the American Prisoner-of-War Experience in Viet Nam, 1964-1973*, by John G. Hubbell; *We Came To Help* by Monika Schwinn and Bernhard Diehl, two West German nurses who were captured outside Danang in 1968. Both nurses had contact with Garwood while being held in a VC POW camp.

*A Hero's Welcome — The Conscience of Sergeant James Daly vs the United States Army* by James Daly is a self-

serving but nonetheless interesting account of a black conscientious objector who, despite his efforts to avoid a combat role in the Army, was assigned to Vietnam as an infantryman and subsequently captured. Daly was initially held in a POW camp in South Vietnam, and later transferred to the Hanoi Hilton in North Vietnam, where he became a member of the infamous "Peace Committee." Despite his own personal turncoat activities, Daly talks about Garwood in his book and places a weapon in his hands, leaving no doubt as to which side Garwood served.

It is also of interest that Daly is one of the returned POWs quoted on page 199 of Zalin Grant's *Survivors* as saying, "After Strickland and Watkins left we never saw Bob Garwood again, which was fine with us. Of everyone I knew he was the only person I believed to be a traitor."

Let's all pray that Carter doesn't intervene and give Garwood some type of amnesty, as happened back in 1973. Discipline has already been seriously undermined in our armed forces.

Yours Truly,  
T.A. Brown  
Trenton, New Jersey

## ANOTHER TURNCOAT ...

Sirs:  
In the Bob Garwood article, the portion entitled "GIs Who Fought for Viet Reds" is interesting but not totally complete.

Let us add the report and eye-witness accounts of a tall, blond, freckled Marine responsible for at least six American casualties while operating in the Khe Sahn area of Lang Vei during Operation Lam Son 719 in March 1971. Elements of 177th Armor encountered various RPG teams led by the most wanted American "turncoat" S.O.B. in the "I" Crops area in Vietnam. It's very difficult to scramble from a burning, "melting" APC. This particular tall, blond American turncoat (to be polite) was pursued by many enraged American fighting men to no avail.

In many instances, enemy/NVA 17th Reg. RPG teams led by him disrupted several good operations and support of 719. If by some chance he is still alive let it be known he is not forgotten.

J.L.L., Vietnam Vet  
Fort Stewart, Georgia

## CROSSOVERS ...

Sirs:  
I received the September SOF today. Chris Doyle's article about Garwood and the insert about the GIs who worked for the communists has prompted me to write you. I was in the Marines during Vietnam, and although I never made it Down South, I was in various support units and a battalion landing team in Hawaii and Okinawa. I distinctly remember that practically everyone knew, from in-country experience or knowing a Vietnam re-

turnee, about the turncoats who had gone over to the Viet Cong. We referred to them as "crossovers" in those days. I would like to share with you three brief accounts of some of these people, just as they were told to me by those involved.

Doyle's account of the "Salt and Pepper" team squares with everything I was told about them from 11 different sources. An MP friend stated further that they also stole vehicles and were seen on at least two occasions mistreating prisoners of war.

The black man of the Central Highlands might be the same one I was told about by an officer of my acquaintance. He was seen wearing black pyjamas and carrying an AK-47, in company with a Vietnamese woman and some VC. As nearly as the observers could tell, he was treated like any other member of the communist unit. The fellow apparently fragged his company commander one night and changed sides, or so the story went.

Finally, a sergeant I worked for in Hawaii told me that he was present later in 1968 when a Marine patrol actually captured a crossover. This man had been calling in air strikes by American aircraft on Marine positions. The sergeant said that the crossover was still wearing his Marine utilities, but with his lance-corporal's insignia on one collar, an NVA officer's insignia on the other, and a red sash around his waist. When my sergeant came up, the other Marines were slugging and kicking the crossover "like a sack of old boots," and he was shouting something about "Communism is going to rule the world," and just then someone smashed a pistol across his face and there was no more heard from him. The crossover was dragged away into the bushes and my sergeant never learned what happened to him. Those present were told to keep quiet about the incident.

I will also share *this* with you: During the '60s, the hippies had a saying: "Keep the faith, baby!" My generation — the Vietnam Generation — either did what we considered our patriotic duty by serving, or we opposed military service and/or the war. A great many of us became disgruntled about our service and joined the picket lines singing, "We Shall Overcome." Contrary to what many of your readers may believe, it is *not* a crime to have a differing opinion. Though our patriotism was badly strained, the vast majority of us remained loyal to the United States — we "kept the faith," according to the way we believed. The crossovers did not. They went over to the enemy and took up arms against their country. If any more of them request to come home, their requests should be refused. After all, who needs a bunch of traitors who cannot even make up their minds?

Sincerely,  
D.M. Reiley  
Elizabeth City, North Carolina

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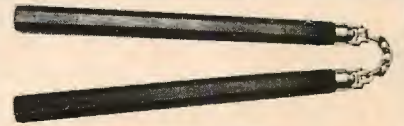
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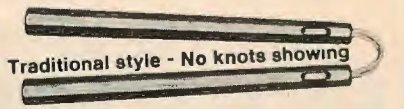


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## AND ANOTHER ...

Sirs:

I was very interested in the article about "Bobby Garwood, Traitor or Victim." Whether he is innocent or guilty remains to be seen. When I was in Vietnam in 1968/69, we had a similar event of a white man (Marine?) who was running with the NVA. This man was shot by a Marine Recon patrol but his body was never recovered. According to authorities, he was identified as a former Marine missing in action. One of my friends knew the man who shot him.

Sincerely,  
Jeffrey K. Myers  
Whiting, Indiana

*Myers enclosed two articles with his letter. The first, from Overseas Weekly, 31 August 1968, describes the shooting of the American turncoat by Lance Cpl. Perry C. Gordon. Search parties could not find the turncoat's body. The second, from the Chicago Tribune, 12 July 1978, cites charges in Washington by Rep. Harold Sawyer (R, Mich.) that Viet Cong soldiers who may be among Indochina's boat people could be eligible for jobs, training and loans ahead of American Vietnam veterans. As Myers says, "We fought them on the battlefield and now we fight them on the job market.... A double sellout to us veterans."*



## ALIVE IN CAMBODIA?

### McKinley Nolan, Turncoat

by Chris Doyle

**L**IEUTENANT General Eugene F. Tighe, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, told a House foreign affairs committee in 1979, "There remains the possibility that a deserter" — identified as Army PFC McKinley Nolan — "may still be alive in Southeast Asia."

In testimony before the committee on 3 June 1979, Tighe noted that nearly 50 Vietnamese refugees have "alleged first hand knowledge" of Americans remaining behind in (South) Vietnam after the war.

Tighe told the committee that some of the reports "allude to deserters or other Americans working with the resistance," but added the reports are too vague to be verified.

*Soldier of Fortune* has learned that in the closed part of the hearing, Tighe said one of the Agency's senior analysts — identified as Charles Trowbridge — would be going to Indochina to ascertain if more precise information could be gathered from the tens of thousands of refugees leaving that area.

### Nolan in Cambodia

Prior to the hearing being adjourned, Trowbridge testified that available information indicates Nolan stayed in Vietnam after the cease-fire and later joined up with Khmer Rouge forces in Cambodia. "He became dissatisfied with that," Trowbridge told the committee, and the last intelligence reports indicated he was heading back for Vietnam.

Recently declassified documents note that Nolan defected to the Viet Cong near Saigon in November 1967, accompanied by his Vietnamese or Cambodian wife. In subsequent months, he voluntarily drafted and recorded propaganda statements which appeared on leaflets and were broadcast over Hanoi and Liberation (Viet Cong) Radio. Nolan is believed to have lived in Tay Ninh Province or nearby areas of Cambodia since his desertion.

From 1972 until Operation Homecoming, Nolan lived with communist personnel in POW camps which also housed American prisoners. Throughout that period, a number of American prisoners had visual contact with him, but there are no indications that he approached them or engaged in any verbal contact. Nolan is not known to have participated in any military actions against U.S. or South Vietnamese troops, but, according to one

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DoD source, "There are some similarities with the Garwood case" (see SOF, September '79).

## Khmer Rouge Prisoner

Exactly how Nolan made the transition from Viet Cong to Khmer Rouge is not known. One source, a former Cambodian government soldier who was detained by the Khmer Rouge in the Memot area, said that Nolan arrived in Mean Chey village in November 1973, and told the Cambodian communists he had been "mistreated" by the VC/NVA and had "escaped" from them. Another source, a Khmer communist rallier, told debriefers that Nolan was engaged in farming and other menial tasks in a nearby village.

Both sources noted that Nolan might be a Khmer Rouge prisoner, since he was always seen accompanied by guards when he left his dwelling. He was not known to be physically restrained, however. U.S. intelligence sources have never conclusively determined whether Nolan was actually captured by the Khmer Rouge and viewed as a prisoner, or, if unaware of his past association with the VC/NVA, the Khmer Rouge were exercising particular caution with him until he was no longer viewed as a potential threat or problem to them.

"In any event," said a disgruntled former intelligence officer, "he has a hell of a lot of accounting to do if he ever turns up, crying to go home like Garwood did."

### "They killed him off."

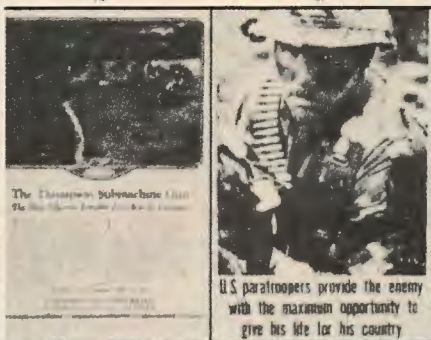
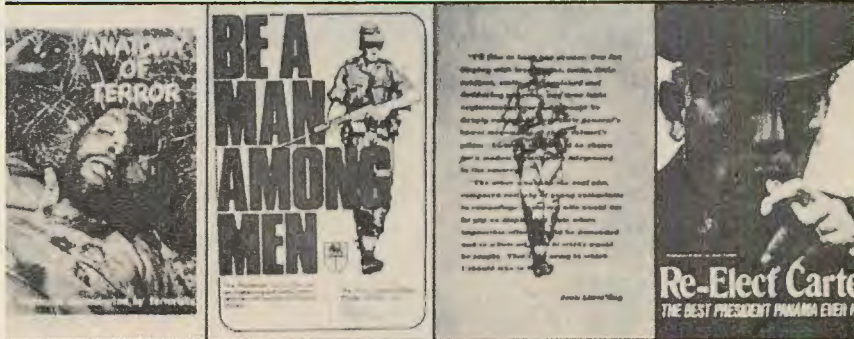
Is Nolan still alive, lurking somewhere in the jungles of Cambodia? The answer is no, according to one military analyst who served in Cambodia with the Military Equipment Delivery Team in the early '70s. "The Khmer Rouge hate westerners," he remarked recently, "and I'm certain they killed off Nolan a long time ago." To bolster his argument, he points to the last correlated sighting of Nolan in 1974.

Others are not so sure. One member of the National League of Families is optimistic Nolan is still alive, and cites the Garwood affair as a case in point. "Garwood dropped out of sight in 1969," he said, "and nothing was heard until this past spring, when he popped up alive and well in Hanoi."

Patty Skelly, Minnesota state coordinator for the National League of Families, also feels there is a good chance McKinley Nolan, late of the U.S. Army, is still alive and well. "There was no information on Garwood for nearly 10 years," she said, "and most had given him up for dead. Then look what happened."



# PHOENIX

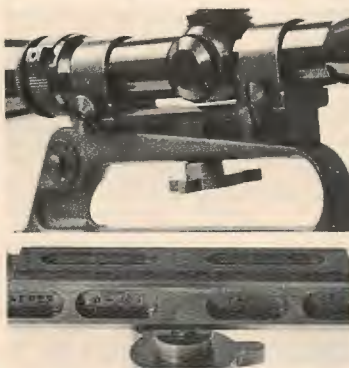


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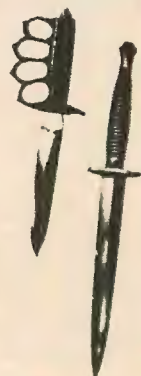


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# APOCALYPSE

Continued from page 59

An airstrike is ordered to suppress the mortars and a wicked looking group of F-5As — actually flown by the Philippine's Blue Diamond stunt team — jockey for position. As they scream in to attack, the whole tree line erupts into a billowing sheet of flame.

The mortars stop falling.

Don't expect to see any cannisters tumbling from the planes because there aren't any. It took 1,200 gallons of gasoline — detonated in a nice straight line — to simulate the attack.

**"We did the best we could."**

Filming the combat scenes was no easy job. In fact, an attempt to get the F-5As to drop water-filled cannisters failed. Part of the difficulty was caused by the U.S. Defense Department's refusal to provide any military equipment because of Coppola's portrayal of the Vietnam War. And while the Filipinos cooperated, they have no Cobras or Huey gunships, according to Dick White, an adviser to the film who helped set up the chopper scenes. White, now a Manila-based freelance aviator, has operated for eight years in Southeast Asia including two tours in Vietnam, one flying Cobras and one flying spotter planes.

"If you look carefully there are going to be some things as phony as hell," says White, "but under the circumstances we did the best we could."

One problem was color, according to White. No matter what they tried, the Roman-candle-type devices used for rockets came out sputtering white smoke.

But the helicopters were the biggest headache. The Loach that was supposedly shot down actually did go down when the crushed mothball charge used to simulate the explosion proved a bit too realistic. White, who was piloting the Loach, was temporarily blinded by the crash and spent the night in a hospital.

Most of the choppers used came from the Philippine Air Force. Different door configurations had to be added to simulate different Huey models, gun mounts and guns had to be built, and U.S. markings painted on the choppers. At the end of each day the choppers had to be returned — all alterations removed and the Philippine markings back on.

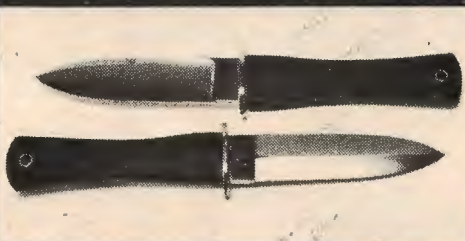
In addition, choppers were frequently recalled for operations against the Maoist-oriented New People's Army and against Moslem insurgents in the southern Philippines.

Some civilian Hueys were also used and painted O.D. with a supposedly washable paint. "There are now a lot of green-looking choppers flying around the Philippines," says White.

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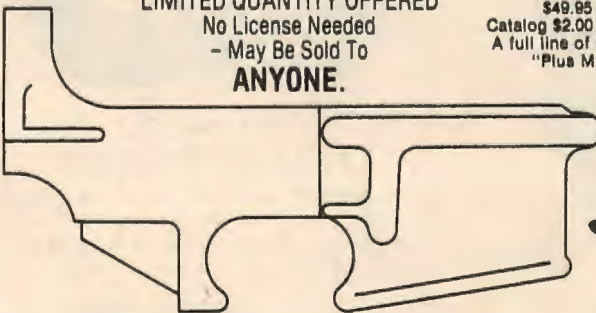
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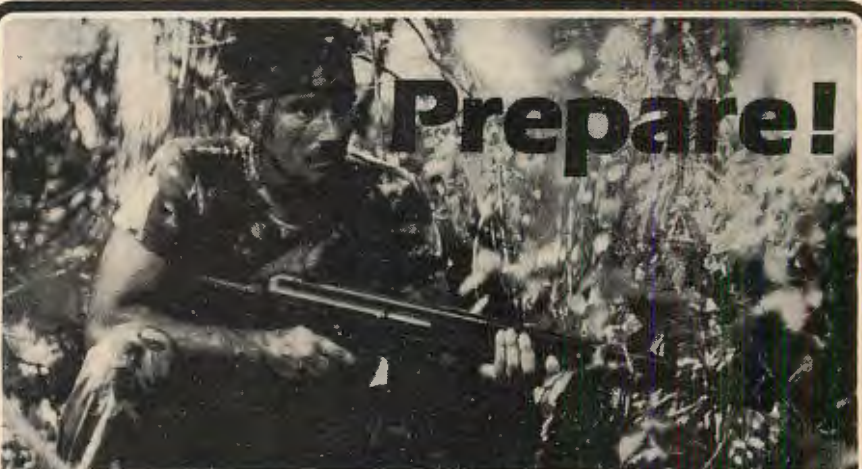
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has been plagued by problems, not the least of which was a typhoon that caused over a million dollars in damages and a budget that soared from \$12 million to about \$30 million.

## **Upriver—Playmates and MGs.**

As the patrol boat moves upriver, the scenes become increasingly mystical and laced with surrealism. Suddenly, out of nowhere an American riverside base camp appears. It looks like a combination of Radio City and the Ginza and its rear-area supply clerks are more interested in passing out dope and whiskey than fuel and ammo.

A trio of U.S.O. Playboy Bunnies, including the 1974 Playmate of the Year, perform a gun-humping dance, driving the GIs wild. Capt. Willard remains aloof and contrasts America's way of war to Charlie's total commitment: "He has only two ways home: death or victory."

Further on, the patrol boat searches a sampan. When a Viet girl — the Vietnamese were played by refugees who had escaped two weeks earlier — makes a sudden move, a doped up M-60 gunner wastes the whole crew. "Du me may!" shouts the gunner. Willard, perhaps justifiably and to the shock of the audience, keeps the mission moving by dispatching the badly wounded girl.

This is Coppola's view of the war being foisted on an unsuspecting audience, very few of whom saw the war first hand. Unfortunately, they have nothing to measure Coppola's version against. Coppola shows one side only and lets the audience believe that's the way it was.

By the time the boat reaches the Do Lung bridge on the Cambodian border, all semblances of reality are gone. GIs swim for the boat with stateside suitcases, little phosphorus sticks blip in the background, and soul music blares from bunkers filled with doped-up GIs.

"There weren't many military advisers up at the Do Lung bridge," says Dick White. About the only thing that can be said for Coppola's bridge scene is: who knows what the Americal Division's Fire Base Mary Ann might have looked like when it was overrun in 1971?

The boat moves on through an amazingly unrealistic Roman candle (i.e. tracer) ambush and through increasing signs of devastation from Kurtz's hit-and-run attacks against the communists.

## **"Judgment defeats us."**

Finally, the arrival at Kurtz's Ankor Wat style base camp. Montagnards — actually Ifugao tribesmen from northern Luzon — painted white and standing in dugouts, make way for the boat to enter. The camp is strewn with bloody heads. Bodies hang from trees and the buzzing of flies fills the air. It is several days before Willard, confined to a bamboo cage, is released and taken before Kurtz.

Kurtz, swathed in shadow, describes the "genius" of horror. The horror of the Viet Cong chopping off and piling up the skinny arms of village children because they had been inoculated by the Americans. One must "kill without feeling passion or judgment . . . because it is judgment that defeats us," he says.

Kurtz has learned from the enemy and adapted their ways.

**"Kill them all."**

With scenes of the bloody base camp fresh in his mind, Capt. Willard decides that Kurtz's rebellion, no matter how right it may have been in the beginning, is now totally out of control.

As the Montagnards perform a ritual slaughter of a water buffalo, hacking it to death, Willard completes his mission and hacks Col. Kurtz to death.

Willard's decision is not without doubt. He stares at Kurtz's Silver Star and his green beret with its full bird badge and thinks of what they represent. He flips through a manuscript and Kurtz's scrawl — "Drop the bomb . . . kill them all" — written across a page reassures Willard of his action.

With the manuscript in one hand and a sickle blade in the other, Willard stands before the Montagnards assembled outside the temple door. It is another moment of choice for Willard for he realizes that the God-like mantle of command has fallen on him. Which hand should he choose? He drops the sickle, and as he passes through the crowd to the boat, the private army let their weapons clatter to the ground.

Many people have criticized *Apocalypse Now* for an anti-climactic ending which leaves many unresolved questions. But this is as it should be. For, in reality, there are no neat conclusive answers to moral conflicts.

That we experience many of these conflicts is due in large part to the narration written by Michael Herr, author of *Dispatches*.

Much of this narration displays a gut-level instinct for the feelings of Vietnam veterans. Feelings such as Willard's as he sits in Saigon and thinks of his home leave: "When I was here I wanted to be there. When I was there all I could think about was getting back to the jungle."

Lines like this bring *Apocalypse Now* into tune for the veteran.

Even the combat scenes, though at times incredibly unrealistic, are still exciting. Exciting enough, in fact, to sit through the mystical journey upriver into the heart of evil, much of which is based on Joseph Conrad's classic novel, *Heart of Darkness*.

Yet, somehow, the surrealistic scenes do not express the reality of horror. Perhaps it is because Coppola himself has never experienced a real horror and doesn't seem to know what it is.



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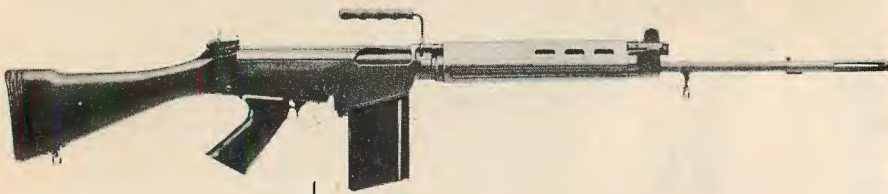
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For the scenes are not stunning or even convincing — just limp.

Francis Coppola has given us no revelations in *Apocalypse Now* except for his own slanted views — views that are often viciously insulting to the men who fought the real war.

### AS I SAW IT

I found this an interesting but badly flawed film, flawed both philosophically and technically, while at the same time containing some memorable battle scenes.

Francis Ford Coppola follows three main themes: a sensitive man is driven mad by over-exposure to violence, brutality and death; war is terrible; and the American soldier in Vietnam was a brave but brutal sort unafraid to storm a heavily fortified village but every bit as willing to blow away women and children as enemy soldiers. The first two themes are valid exercises in literature. And if Coppola wanted to make an anti-American military propaganda movie, he could have done it much more skillfully than this. He simply overextended himself. Apparently Coppola couldn't make up his mind on which theme so just used them all.

I thought two scenes particularly well done. A unit of the First Air Cav

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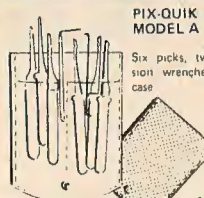
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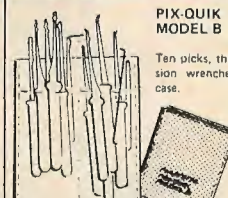
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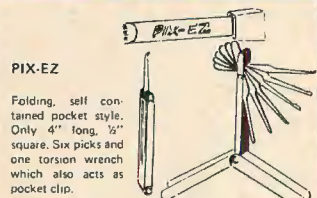
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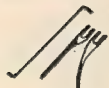
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is assigned the mission of storming a heavily fortified VC village, one that they know is bad news, so a Navy riverine patrol boat can pass by a river-mouth commanded by the village. Anyone who has ever gone into a hot LZ with an M16 in his hand and his heart in his mouth will be on the edge of his seat during this scene, I can assure you.

And the scene, where the Navy patrol boat comes under a riverbank ambush, is excellent. The pyrotechnics are phony but the *feeling* of being ambushed is there.

Coppola depends heavily on the use of surrealism to emphasize his themes and in so doing he employed a meat-axe approach when a scalpel technique would have been far more effective. Things like discotheque, psychedelic USO shows with a plexiglass stage being held at an advanced jungle camp, troops riding surfboards during the midst of a battle and some other weird scenes destroy credibility, rather than emphasize irrationality and the unreality of war.

I did not note a technical adviser in the credits. If there was one, he probably demanded that he not be credited because the picture abounds with technical flaws, large and small.

The unit selected for the village assault, for example: the First of the Ninth Cav. (It is also referred to incorrectly as "an old cavalry division" when the Ninth is actually an old cavalry regiment and, during the Indian wars, was composed of black enlisted men and white officers). Anyhow, the mission of the First of the Ninth in 'Nam was not to storm fortified villages. It was employed by the Air Cav as a true cavalry unit — finding the enemy, fixing him, calling in conventional heavy cavalry units and then getting the hell out of there. They did very well at their job, too — I flew with them many times. But the units of the Air Cav that normally stormed fortified hills and hot LZs were the battalions of the 5th, 7th, 8th, and 12th.

I also wonder why a man who formerly served in the 173rd Airborne Brigade and is now on a special mission for MAC-V and the CIA wears throughout the film what appears to be an ARVN Marine cammie outfit. Maybe it just looked good to the filmmakers.

Then you have the truly incredible scene of a Huey airlifting an armored navy patrol craft. That would have taxed the ability of a Skycrane, let alone a little old Huey.

Oddly enough, the filmmakers got one thing almost exactly right: their commander of the First of the Ninth. This role, played by Robert Duvall (who steals the show), is obviously bas-

ed on a real life lieutenant colonel named John B. Stockton, who brought the First of the Ninth Cav to 'Nam and was one of the men that invented the First Air Cav's concept of helicopter assault. Like the character created by Duvall, Col. Stockton affected an old black cavalry hat with crossed sabers on the front — and also was an expert chopper pilot. Stockton also had a cavalry saber hanging in his tent at An Khe. In his own way, Stockton was every bit as flamboyant as Duvall's Col. Kilgore.

And there was a unit of the Air Cav that often sounded the cavalry charge on a bugle during battle, although it wasn't the First of the Ninth. To the best of my recollection, it was Bravo Company, Second of the Second Cav, the bugle being a North Vietnamese instrument picked up during the Ia Drang Valley battle.

And the sight of Montagnards skillfully balancing in dugout canoes also disturbed me. I never saw a Montagnard in a canoe or anywhere near one, for that matter. They lived in the mountains and there were no navigable streams around. (Montagnards painted white is mentioned elsewhere in this issue.)

But special effects are used to good advantage throughout the film, particularly in the battle scenes. Coppola seems a little over impressed with billowing clouds of burning gasoline but that's nitpicking.

The cinematography is beautiful throughout and is employed about as effectively as the cameraman could operate under the limitations probably imposed by Coppola.

One final word of criticism. That is the character of the "photo-journalist," as he is fond of referring to himself while capering about reciting lengthy soliloquies on the wisdom and humanity of Col. Kurtz. This character is about as surreal a person as are some of the scenes about surreal things. Apparently this is sort of a composite of Dana Stone and Sean Flynn (two photo-journalists who did indeed disappear in Cambodia and have never been heard from since) and Michael Herr, author of *Dispatches*, and *Esquire* Magazine correspondent who serves as narrator of the film.

Up to the release of *Apocalypse Now*, there had not been a good war movie made about Vietnam. There still hasn't. And that's too bad because this could have been it. --Bob Poos



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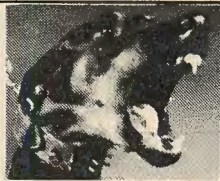
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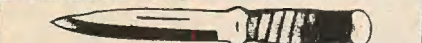
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## COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT

Continued from page 15

This month Ken Hackathorn evaluates the Silvertip and other JHP rounds and hollowpoint vs. hardball bullets. He also discusses AMT Hardballer and S&W Model 59 modifications. Finally, he discusses his philosophy of SMG techniques.

WINCHESTER-Western is offering a new .45 ACP jacketed hollow-point (JHP) cartridge. Sold under the trade name "Silvertip," this 185-grain JHP load uses an unusual aluminum jacket material to cover the lead core. This material is very thin and coupled with a large, hollow-nose cavity and soft-lead core, the round gives excellent performance when fired into animal tissue. The bullet shape and length are such that the feeding angle is similar to the standard 230-grain hard-ball cartridge. This 185 JHP Silvertip from Winchester-Western proved to be very accurate. The lightweight bullet also reduces recoil in the .45 auto and these Silvertip rounds make for rapid shot recovery during fast firing situations.

For years I have been reluctant to recommend various JHP rounds for the .45 auto in defensive shooting, preferring the standard 230-grain hard-ball cartridge. This is not because I believe that hard-ball .45 ammo makes a great anti-personnel round. It does in fact have some serious shortcomings. But nothing seems to feed and function as reliably as hard-ball in a .45 auto. With the vast array of .45 auto pistols in use, it is folly to recommend a cartridge that will not function well in all of them.

A case in point is the Speer 200-grain JHP .45 ACP cartridge sold as the "Inspector." While it functions well in my pistols (which have been throated and tuned), it has failed to feed reliably in a number of other pistols tested. I personally like the Speer 200 JHP round, and with its large nose cavity, it would be formidable even if it failed to expand. Due to the Speer 200-grain JHP bullet's short nose configuration, the feeding angle is less than that of a 230-grain hard-ball round. As a result, the short 200 JHP Speer will occasionally take a nose dive into the frame's feed ramp and fail to function.

Remington introduced a 185-grain JHP round a few years ago. It feeds dependably in all the pistols I have seen it used with, including a few old 1911 GI issue pistols. But the SC rounds are loaded to 940-950 feet per second. At this low velocity, the rounds fail to expand adequately. It takes at least 1000 fps to make most jacketed hollow-point bullets rupture and expand in live tissue — frequently only after something resistant such as bone or heavy muscle has been hit.

The Winchester-Western Silvertip .45 ACP cartridge appears to combine all in-

redients necessary for a functional, reliable, expanding .45 auto JHP round. I am confident with this new round and am using it in my carry pistol.

Before staking your life on any brand or style of new ammunition, fire at least 100 rounds through your pistol to insure proper functioning.

THE cartridge used in a defensive sidearm should be selected with consideration of the type of self-defense shooting one expects to encounter. Hollow-point ammo is ideal for persons — such as merchants — who do not wish to have their slugs penetrate a felon and hit an innocent bystander. Wild shots should be stopped by solid resistance — such as display cases, plate glass windows or other barriers — preventing bullets from reaching beyond the shootout scene. While the debate continues over whether or not center-fire handgun velocities cause hollow-point rounds to expand in living tissue, few will argue the point that they offer an excellent means of reducing ricochets and overpenetration in built-up areas. JHP handgun ammo is thus ideal for urban police work. ACLU loudmouths always jump up and down about the so-called deadly effects of the hollow-point round. The truth is that few if any medical examiners can tell the difference between the hollow-point or regular-shaped bullet wound channel. About the only clue is that round-nose bullets push aside nerve trunks and blood vessels, whereas the sharp corners of a JHP-round nose cuts and severs them.

Round-nose bullets, especially the 230-grain .45 auto hard-ball, are famous for ricochets off large bones. A slight-angle hit will often cause the .45 hard-ball to skid off the ribs, following the hard surface of the bone instead of punching through. A hollow- or flat-point-design bullet will usually cut right through the bone with a cookie-cutter effect. Once the nose of a jacketed hollow-point bullet is upset, the jagged edges are very efficient at cutting.

While not as impressive as the 9x19 parabellum ball round for use against light armor, the .45-auto ball round will almost always penetrate an assailant's body.

If one's sold on the 230-grain ball round for use in the .45, Hornady Manufacturing Co., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1848, Grand Island, NE 68801, has a new flat-point, full-metal-jacket, hard-ball bullet available for reloaders. This new design should greatly increase shock effect with the .45 hard-ball round.

Price is \$8.50 for a 100-bullet box. This new bullet has a longer bearing surface; some increase in recoil can be expected.

MANY owners of the AMT Hardballer .45 auto pistol are complaining of problems with its function and accuracy. While the scope of these difficulties are too complex to cover here, a number of shooters have found that re-

placing the AMT barrel, bushing, link and pin with a standard Colt Mk IV barrel and bushing set has solved their problems.

**O**WNERS of current S&W Model 59 auto pistols have noticed some improvement in functional reliability of these pieces. They now have an improved extractor modification and corrected magazines. The early guns were plagued with bad magazines with a high malfunction level. The base plate of the new magazines will be marked S&W 59, with a letter "A" below it. Consider only these "A" magazines for use with the M59 auto. S&W will replace and modify any early M59 9mm autos that require the improvements.

**A**S a result of a submachine-gun skill article I did for SOF (February '79), many comments have been made to me over the apparent difference of opinion between Chuck Taylor and me regarding SMG technique. As Taylor states in his articles, he is an expert. I am, however, a serious student of weaponcraft. Chuck Taylor bases his beliefs on experience, and I must appreciate that. But we do differ upon technique and in some cases weapon choice.

I still maintain that the Mac 10 is strictly a special-purpose SMG. Great for close-in work such as bodyguard utility while traveling in a car. It is also handy for moving around in enclosed spaces. And it is the ideal gun for terrorist activity. There, inaccurate auto firing is just fine, for the terrorist could care less about where his wild shots go. But anyone that considers the Mac 10 the ideal general-issue SMG for police or military use, has, in my opinion, been smoking too many funny cigarettes. As to technique, I must admit I'm old-fashioned. I still believe that if one fires five rounds at a target, his skill should be based on the number of hits out of those five. Sending three of those rounds off target is sloppy shooting to me.

In police work, particularly, wild shots are not acceptable. And as I have said before, hits must be located in torso target area.

A hit in the thigh and another in the shoulder may not be good enough to keep the crazy with an AK from sending one to the happy hunting ground. Thus, I like slower cyclic rates, solid shoulder stocks that provide fast positioning, good sights and the method of getting fast, centered, multiple, upper-torso hits.

The theory of dumping a magazine of full auto off in the direction of an opponent was tested in Southeast Asia. The results were not impressive.

An empty SMG is really a very poor club.

—Ken Hackathorn



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## POW

Continued from page 29

### FLYING "UP NORTH"

When Dieter Dengler was rescued, I was an AP war correspondent working out of Pleiku, where the First Air Commandos, the unit that spotted him after his escape from the Pathet Lao, was based.

I heard a rumor that they had done something spectacular and raced over to interview Gene Dietrick, the unit commander and the pilot who spotted Dengler.

Dietrick confirmed that a U.S. escapee from a POW camp had been picked up, but MAC-V had imposed tight security on details of the story and Dietrick could say no more.

I wanted to do some kind of story on the outfit, so I asked if I could fly with them on a combat mission. Dietrick said it would be okay providing it was an in-country flight but that correspondents were not allowed to fly "up North."

So I got suited up and hung around the squadron ready room for a couple of days until a three-plane group including Dietrick, Maj. Monroe Blaylock and Capt. LeRoy Lowe, was assigned a strafing mission in support of the 22nd ARVN Ranger Battalion.

However, after we were aloft, that mission was aborted and we did indeed fly "up North" with the fliers eliciting from me a firm promise that I would not later divulge our destination, since it could ruin their careers.

The mission was to support a Special Forces team that was trying to extricate itself, was being hotly pursued by North Vietnamese regulars and had a wounded man. The SF squad was badly in need of air support.

I will never forget that flight as long as I live. One moment we were up about 10,000 feet and the earth below was just a mass of greenery. Then we went into a screaming dive and soon you could distinguish hills, then trees, and then we were so close to the deck that you could see pebbles in a stream bed.

All the way down the orange balls of tracer rounds curved up at us and appeared to me to be coming right into the cockpit, although my plane was unscathed.

We unloaded an interesting mixture of napalm, bombs, rockets and .50 caliber and I thought I would have to change my skivvies when my plane flew right through the cloud of napalm smoke. Then we angled back up and I sighed with relief, thinking it was all over. Not so. Down we plunged again, pulling g's that stretched your face into a grimace and blasting away with the wing guns.

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Finally it was all over and we heard on the radio the voice of the SF man on the ground congratulating us: "You really sanitized that position. Thanks. Over and out." The Jolly Green Giants were visible below us, picking up the team and zipping back south, contour flying.

Thanks to the U.S. Marine Corps, I know a little something about how to stay alive in ground combat and in Vietnam I had plenty of opportunity to perfect those skills. I understand that sort of thing and feel reasonably self-assured when doing it.

But that business of diving down directly into enemy fire, being unable to control your destiny by searching out favorable terrain and spotting rocks, palmtrees and the like to dodge behind left me with a terrible feeling of helplessness.

It was far and away the most frightened I ever was in Vietnam or Laos. And all the while I thought about the possibility of being forced down over enemy territory and taken to one of those POW camps we had heard so much about.

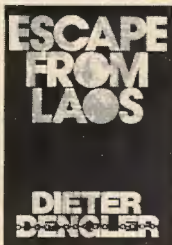
As we rose aloft again, the Skyraider pilots pulled up close to one another and studied each other's planes for possible damage. There was none serious this time, for which we were all thankful.

On the way back we buzzed a Montagnard village a couple of times and one of the pilots remarked, "Those are friendlies and every time we're in the vicinity, we let 'em know we're around watching out for them."

Returning to Pleiku, I decided that the First Air Commandos were a very professional, very Strac outfit. They knew their job and did it to perfection. That's why they found Dieter Dengler.



--Bob Poos



## Escape From Laos

Dieter Dengler

Remarkable story ... calls to mind the Vietnam sections of the film "The Deer Hunter." —Publishers Weekly

Recommended reading ... Soldier of Fortune Magazine, February, 1980

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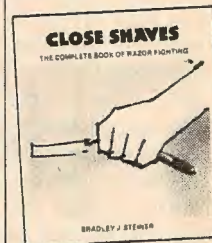


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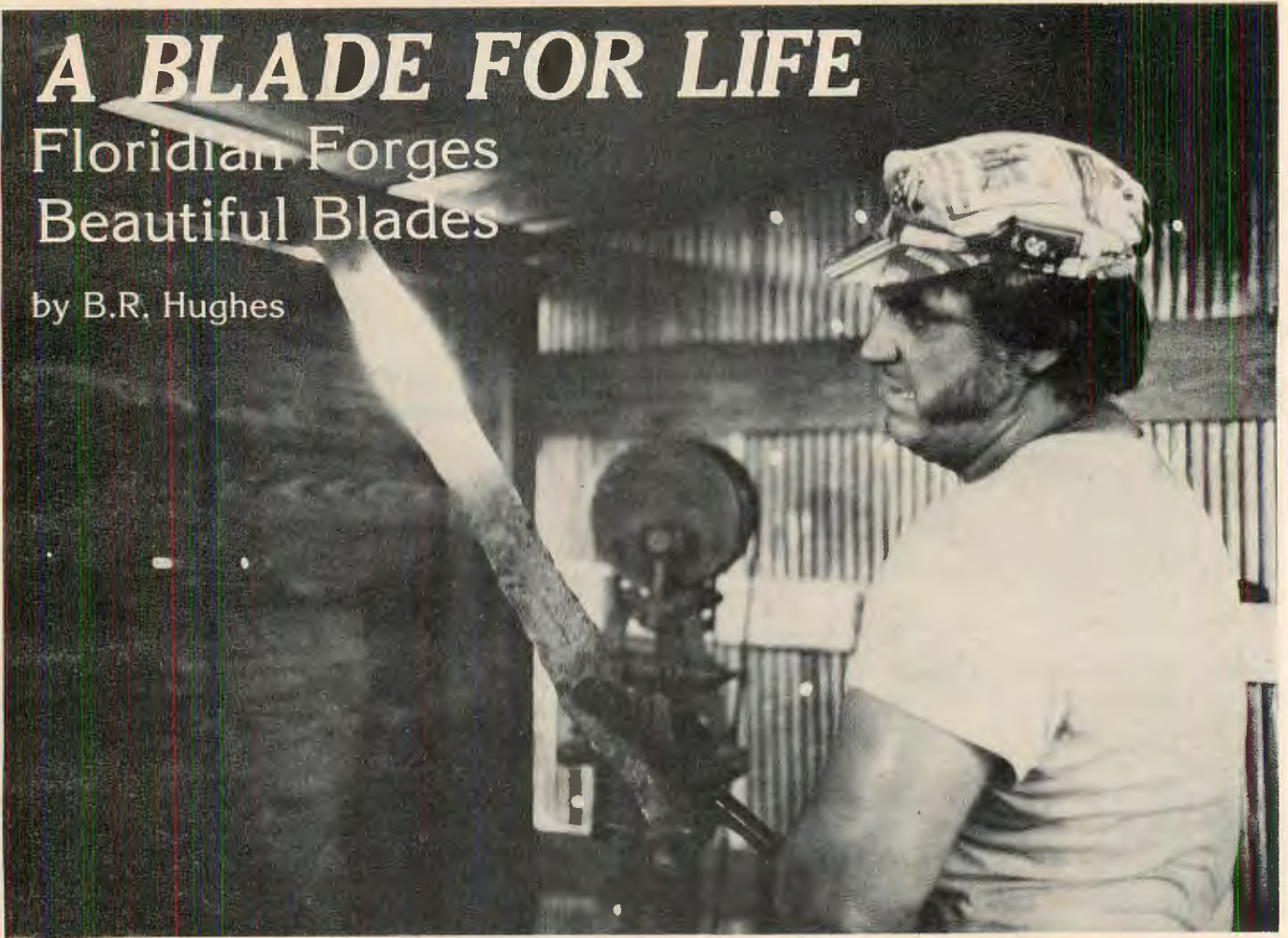
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# A BLADE FOR LIFE

## Floridian Forges Beautiful Blades

by B.R. Hughes



**E**VERY person who orders a knife from me may not have to use it in a life-or-death situation, but should that occasion arise, my blade will not fail in the crunch," comments Bill Bagwell, Rt. 2, Box 72C, De Funiak Springs, FL 32433, concerning the hand-forged knives that leave his shop.

For several years, the muscular Bagwell, who more than lives up to the mental image that most of us have concerning blacksmiths, was content to make utilitarian hunting knives and large Bowies for collectors. Each knife bearing his name was hammer forged and heat treated and tempered in the forge to produce a superlative cutting edge. But perhaps a year ago Bagwell decided he would prefer to make combat or survival

knives for men who might actually need the qualities inherent in his blades.

"It should be obvious that there are literally dozens, maybe hundreds, of knifemakers who offer knives of sufficient quality to dress out a whitetail buck once a year, and for a knife that is simply going to be on display in a collection there is no functional purpose for high tensile strength or for a durable cutting edge," explains Bagwell.

**"My blade won't fail in the crunch."**

"There are also a few modern smiths who can offer knives which have high tensile strength, edge-holding qualities, and ease of sharpening characteristics which make them most attractive to those who

need a knife for the toughest jobs imaginable," he adds. "I don't think anyone currently makes a knife that can compare to my knives feature for feature. To put it bluntly, there are no other knives on the market today that are as good as mine, regardless of the price."

Since I have been writing about knives for approximately 15 years, including some 200 published magazine articles and authorship or co-authorship of three books, I have accumulated some knowledge on the subject. For the past five years or so I have been using a Bagwell knife for some rather tough chores, and maybe three minutes on a buffer would have that knife looking as good as new. That Bagwell knife accompanied me on my 1976 jaunt to Rhodesia.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

B.R. "Bill" Hughes, whose article on the first Texarkana, Ark., bowling pin combat shoot was featured in *SOF* (September '79), was editor of *Muzzleloader Magazine* until the spring of 1979. As all blackpowder enthusiasts know, interest in antique weapons usually includes expertise in

allied arts and crafts ranging from buckskins and beadwork to knives and tomahawks.

Hughes is no exception. His longtime interest in handmade knives has led to the publication of many of his articles in national magazines and authorship or coauthorship of three books on the subject. He is presently a member of the board of directors of

the American Bladesmith Society.

In 1976, Hughes traveled to Rhodesia with a muzzleloading rifle, participating in the first modern black powder hunt permitted by the Rhodesian game department.

—M.L. Jones

Hence, I have a good opinion of Bagwell knives, but I do not feel qualified to pass judgment on a knife for combat purposes, so I decided to find some competent judges.

Bill Bidwell, who may well be in Africa in an advisory capacity by the time you read this, is an active participant in combat pistol matches and has established a good reputation as a pistolsmith. He has studied under Art Gitlin, former martial arts editor of *Soldier of Fortune*, and he has considerable active-duty time. Bidwell also possesses a modest collection of handmade knives, including pieces by Dennehy, Price, Randall, Franklin, Enos, and Bagwell.

### "Bill's weapons have *chi*."

"Bill's blades are, in my estimation," Bidwell says of Bagwell's knives, "as good as they come. I spend a lot of time with weapons of various types, and I have found that if you take several perfectly matched weapons of a given type, you will find perhaps one that feels alive to you. It is really indescribable. The Orientals call it *chi*. If a weapon has good *chi*, it feels it. Art Gitlin says it's because the maker puts a piece of himself into the blade.

"Bill's blades have that quality. That is just one reason why I will never again buy a blade that is not forged. The other is strength. I personally believe that the forged blade is better in that department. I have used several stock removal blades, and I simply do not think they have the strength of a good forged blade.

"After some years of using and buying knives and even having my own designs made, I have come to believe a few things: first, I think Randall makes good knives which in design and price are the best dollar value to be had; second, I believe that from a design standpoint Dennehy's blades are the finest; third, if a man wants a combat knife with that extra something in feel and design with price no object, then Bagwell is your man. Dan and Bill are the only two who will ever make knives for me again.

"Bagwell's execution is first rate and he deserves to have a top seat in the history of knifemaking."

Next, I spoke to Harry Kuhn, an advanced edged-weapons collector who put in his service time with the 82nd Airborne and now teaches karate and knife fighting.

"When I met Bill Bagwell at the New York knife show," Kuhn said, "I placed an order for one of his Damascus-bladed knives. I asked him if he'd like a tracing of my hand, but he said that he wouldn't need it since he had shaken hands with me.

"That knife has cut rope, plastic, branches, roots and dirt, burlap, not to mention a mudflap on a truck. I now have a first-class working knife and it certainly is worth its price — approximately \$100 per blade inch.

"Bagwell made me one hell of a knife. When it finally does get dull it takes about 10 seconds to sharpen. My next project is to let Bagwell make me another knife."

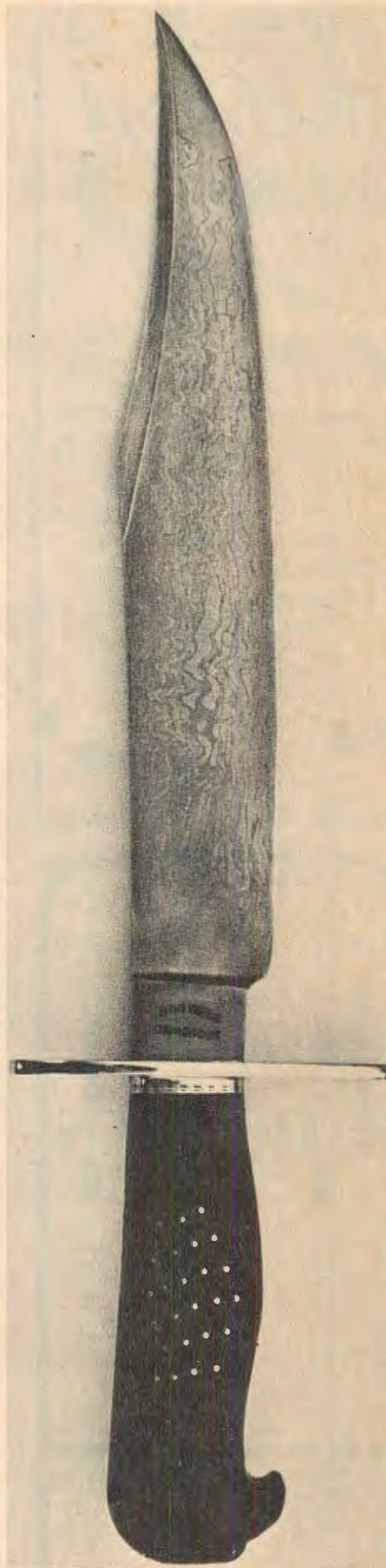
At this point, a word might be in order concerning Bagwell's blade materials. His standard steel is called "double extra-forged," and Bagwell considers it the equal of any blade material available today, with the exception of his Damascus steel. An eight-inch bladed fighting knife with double brass guard made from his double extra-forged steel will cost from \$250 to \$500, depending upon the handle material selected and desired extras such as etching, scrimshaw, etc. His Damascus steel, which may contain as many as 1,024 layers of steel, hammer-forged together, costs about \$100 per blade inch. That is steep, but remember that genuine combat quality Damascus steel is probably the finest blade material available in the history of cutlery. Such a blade may require as much as a month of dedicated, skilled labor and several hundred pounds of coal. Why is such a blade better? It is stronger, for the same reason that a piece of plywood is stronger than a standard piece of wood.

It also cuts better. When you try a properly sharpened Damascus blade on the hair of your arm, the hair literally jumps off. Finally, if you have ever been frustrated by trying to sharpen a blade made from D2, 440C, or 154CM in the field with a small pocket stone, you'll genuinely appreciate Damascus, because perhaps six or seven licks on each side of the blade will restore it to shaving sharpness.

Mark it well: to the best of my knowledge, there are only three or four men, including Bagwell, offering combat-quality Damascus today. A few lads offer so-called Damascus, but they make no promises concerning edge-holding or tensile strength. Bill Moran, dean of American smiths, reintroduced Damascus steel back in 1973, and while Moran's blades are as good as they come, Moran is some seven to eight years behind in filling orders, which brings us right back to Bagwell. He can generally deliver a finished knife about six months from date of order. Moreover, Bagwell has been known to rush things a bit for men who have a specific need for a superlative knife in a hurry.

I next spoke about Bagwell to Jimmy Buckner, a long-time member of the Georgia Highway Patrol. He is a bona fide knife buff who for years looked for a piece that would stand the gaff and keep on cutting. Since purchasing his Bagwell combat model about a year ago, he has stopped looking.

"I had the privilege of sitting there and watching Bagwell make my blade at the forge," Buckner commented. "The resulting knife is the finest that I have ever used, bar none."



Bagwell calls this one his "Vidalia Maiden," after Jim Bowie's famous sandbar battle. Brass handle pins for decoration only.



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## FLAK

Continued from page 21

*Some nut has written us this letter and signed your name to it. We thought we'd publish it to give you the opportunity to locate the person and force him or her to cease such practices. In the unlikely event you did write this, we shan't dignify it by further comment.—The Eds.*

## PRACTICAL MARTIAL ARTS ...

Sirs:

As an experienced martial artist and Vietnam combat veteran (USMC), of Asian-American descent I must say that I find your magazine's approach to the martial arts relevant and provocative.

I am tired of the "oriental" mystique and mumbo-jumbo that has been fed to the American public. The American people deserve a martial art that is appropriate to the American experience and context.

Though I may not agree with some of your political positions, I would strongly agree with your desire to make the martial arts speak more directly to the needs of the American people.

Sincerely,

Henry Jung  
Boston, Massachusetts

*We're glad you like Rafael Lima's practical approach to martial arts and we'll keep printing his column every time he sends us copy.—The Eds.*

## MEMORIES OF PARRIS ...

Sirs:

"Semper Fidelis" (November '79) was beautiful and most informative. I went through Parris Island (Platoon 102) from September to December, 1947, and my son is presently there (Platoon 3069). Col. Hart's father, Gen. Hart, was commanding general of P.I. during my boot training.

I served for four years, having had a well-rounded tour — sea duty aboard the USS Missouri for two years, 2nd Marine Div. in Camp Lejeune and 1st Marine Div. during the Inchon-Seoul campaign and finally Quantico prior to discharge. The memories were good and I am very proud that my son chose to keep the family tradition.

SOF is a fantastic magazine — a man's magazine — and certainly a Marine's.

Semper fidelis,  
Joseph A. Saluzzi  
Brooklyn, New York

## AND STILL MORE MEMORIES ...

Sirs:

"Semper Fidelis" takes me back to the days I was a boot in Platoon 1081 "C" Company, 1st Recruit Training Bn., M.C.R.D., San Diego, Calif.

To quote Col. Frank Hart in the article:

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"The young men we are getting at Parris Island today are simply a different breed of cat than we got 30, 20, 15, even 10 years ago." I can't express how true that statement is. I only wish more parents were like mine and would teach their kids what the word patriotism means.

Semper fidelis,  
Patrick E. Allen  
Norwalk, California

## EQUAL TIME ...

Sirs:

I want equal time to complain about the inferiority of the K-88 and to warn your good readers to disregard Lee Jurras's article (October '79) and move up a notch to the truly excellent 750mm or 1250mm Celestron Telephoto five-inch lens.

I purchased the advertised K-88 in July 1979. Upon examination, I found the interior mirrors covered with specks of lint and dust. I further found an unusual filmy coating on the interior which the booklet accompanying the K-88 described as "normal" and nothing to worry about. I find such film and dust particles distracting and offensive. The K-88 assembly was so loose and wobbly that it infuriated me. How much more dust might get inside after a trip or two into the field?

When using a zoom-eyepiece in the higher magnifications I found the field-of-view became excessively darkened so it was not feasible to magnify to such a degree. I realized this K-88 (or Celestron 90) was unable to live up to its so-called "claims," but that, in fact, the claims properly belonged to the five-inch telephoto lens which costs an extra \$200 and is worth every bit of it. By comparison, I found the K-88 crude and extremely limited for field use. Do not mislead your readers about the imaginary merits of the K-88.

The Schmidt-Cassegrain five-inch telephoto lens is excellent, despite what Lee Jurras had to say about the K-88. I realize you are being paid to advertise the K-88 and may feel indebted to the Celestron or Rocky Mountain Science Supply people to stand behind their product. Are you courageous enough to print my "equal-time" response?

Respectfully,  
Gary J. Peterson  
Homer, Alaska

Lee Jurras replies:

*Sorry you had such bad luck with the RMS K-88 but I call them as I see them. Common sense tells us we can't expect the equivalent of Nikkor at bargain basement prices.*

*I'll admit on first examination the "looseness" was a concern, particularly from the standpoint of dust here in the Southwest, but after three months of rather loose treatment of both handling and exposure to the elements, the K-88 held up rather well.*

*No intent was made to mislead our readers and SOF is not required to give*

*glowing reports for our advertisers. To a working pro a lens is a tool, nothing more nothing less. It either produces or it doesn't.*

*Yep, for 200 bucks more you can take the next step up the ladder and get 200 bucks more service. However, my test and evaluation was on the K-88. And to repeat myself, I stand by my findings that the K-88 I tested is a helluva lens for the price.*

## TRIBUTE TO BULL ...

Sirs:


Thanks for publishing Benjamin Schemmer's tribute to Col. "Bull" Simons (SOF, November '79). It was greatly appreciated by those of us who knew him. Our country has not produced a better soldier or a finer commander. His bravery and exploits are unsurpassed.

Yes, Mr. Schemmer, "life was precious to him," as his respect for his men's welfare was always paramount.

"Bull" Simons was truly a class individual who will never be forgotten by those of us that were privileged to have fought with him.

Respectfully,  
Patrick St. Clair  
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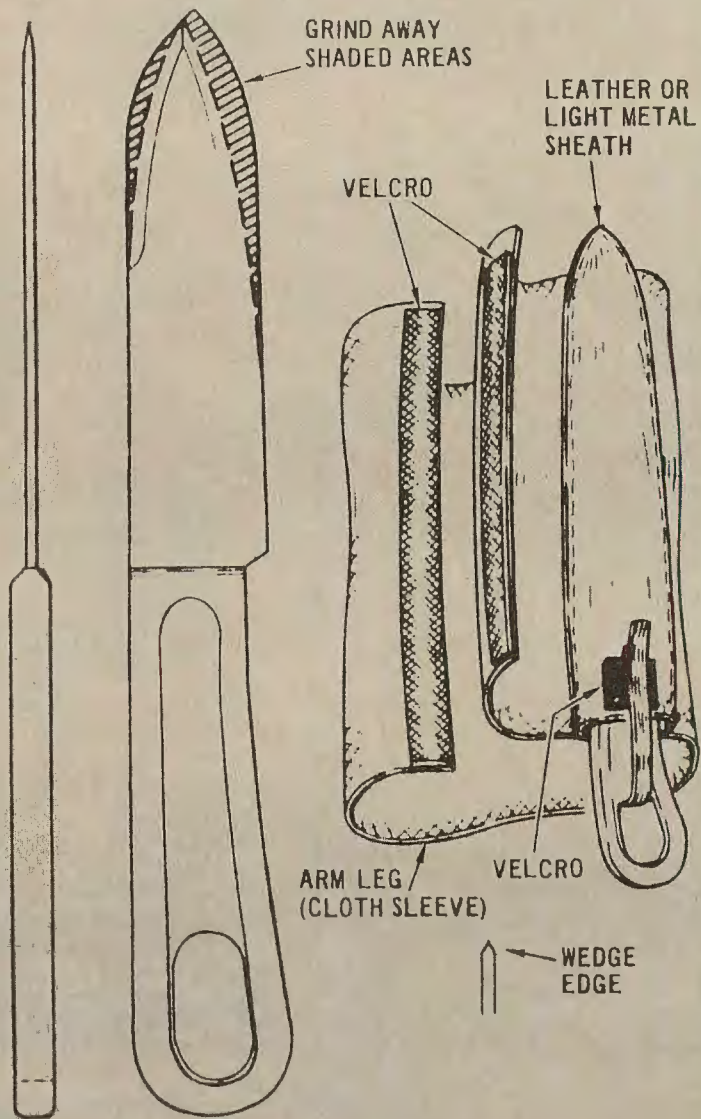
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# BOOT KNIFE

by Robert G. White

## Combat-Ready Kitchenware



**R**ATHER than pay \$50 to \$125 for a boot knife, you can easily fashion your own from a surplus G.I. table knife at practically no cost. The knife is thin, strong and lightweight and can be carried in a leg or fore-arm sheath which can also be easily made. Since the knife handle already has a slotted opening, it is ideally suited for a velcro quick-draw strap to hold it securely in its sheath.

### THEN AND NOW

The problem in carrying a knife in your boot is that you can't get at it. In the old days when men were men they wore their boots outside their pants and their blade was slipped into the top of the boot with the handle showing. They were not sent to jail for carrying their blade.

Since that is no longer acceptable and you carry your knife inside your boot which is under your pants leg, it is nearly impossible to extract your blade in a reasonable length of time. So the "boot" knife should be more properly called the leg knife or fore-arm knife as most people carry them without wearing boots at all.

### VELCRO SNAP

By use of the cloth, leather and velcro sheath, the knife can be worn without boots, handle-down so that it will be readily accessible, practically dropping into your hand when the holding strap is released. The velcro "snap" holds tightly but can be instantly released by pulling apart. Velcro strips are available in ladies fabric stores in one-inch wide strips and can be cut to size using scissors. Sew the matching parts in place or glue them, using contact cement. You will find that velcro is handy in many applications.

### GRINDING

Go slowly when you grind your blade so that the temper will not be removed. Dip the blade occasionally in water or oil to cool it — wipe it and grind some more. Keep the blade moving over the wheel so that it will not get unduly hot at any one place. After grinding, use a flat file to straighten and flatten your surfaces. Create a wedge edge. Then shine the blade with medium and fine emery paper, using long strokes going with the length of the blade. Finish the edges using medium and hard stones and final finish with a leather. The edge can be made razor-sharp and will be strong enough not to roll over. The metal is surprisingly good — but, of course, it is not great.

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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE 85

# PLOUGHSHARES INTO SWORDS

## South West Africa's Embattled Farmers

by Al J. Venter

**H**AD South West African farmer Herman Redecker been born a century ago, he would almost certainly have been proud to take his place within the ranks of the old Imperial German *Schutztruppe*. This was a body of men that played a prominent role in maintaining security in what was known before the Great War (WWI) as *Suedwes Afrika*.

For he is such a man; reflecting in word and action an almost Prussian bearing, a trait barely offset by his youthful looks and bushwhacker's beard. His grandfather, Herr Meyer, was a member of the original corps that put down the bloody Herero Revolt.

When the mood takes him, Redecker puts on the same grey felt Australian-type bush hat which has passed down the family line to him and was once recognized as a badge of authority in this crack colonial regiment. Then, gun in hand, he will sit on the modest veranda of the house he built himself and stare across the featureless terrain that characterizes much of northern South West Africa.

If you care to listen, he will talk about the changing face of Africa, an Africa that belongs as much to him as it does to those who threaten to take it away from him.

In recent months, when there was an acknowledged terrorist presence on his farm, as an officer attached to the local commando he was more preoccupied with countering insurgency than in reminiscing.

The last terrorist in the Tsumeb-Outjo triangle had not yet been killed before Redecker was back at his job as a cattle inspector for the SWA administration. Each month he is required to travel thousands of kilometers across this spare land — usually alone — checking for diseases and other alien influences among the nation's livestock. Cattle remains the mainstay of South West Africa's economy and in Redecker's domain it's his job to see that they remain free of foot-and-mouth, rinderpest and tick-borne diseases.

His is a lonely job. It's the same for his wife — German-born Gundel — who often has to spend up to two weeks of the month alone on their farm with their only child, Reinhardt, a loaded pistol and a shotgun beside the bed for security.

Redecker's role within the South West African rural community can be precarious.

Traveling from one farm to another, he is often the only white man many farm

laborers see for weeks at a stretch. During recent terrorist incursions, several farm owners — wary of venturing too far from their security-fenced homes — asked Redecker to help distribute rations to some of the more remote cattle posts he was about to visit.

"They did not say they were afraid of landmines or terrorist ambushes. Nor did I mention it, for it was obvious that there were terrorists about. And, in any event, we are all in the same boat, so it's a pleasure to be of assistance when I can," he said.

Redecker knows the bush. He understands it like some of the black men with whom he comes into regular contact, for he was born and brought up on this African soil. He can follow a track in the bush and read its sign like the average city dweller flips through his Sunday papers.

Once, he and a friend, Uli Truebenbach, were dropped in a remote part of the country during a military exercise and the entire army in the area was ordered out to look for them.

"It was a maneuver, but it became a hell, for they chased us for days. We were short of food and often desperate for water, but we had to live off the land. They never caught us, though, even if



ABOVE: Herman Redecker — like without .357 magnum he packs at





most of his associates — rarely moves anywhere his belt.

**BELOW: Herman Redecker of the Otjiwarongo District; he is a master tracker, proud of his historical links with old German Imperial Schutztruppe.**

there were times when we had air force choppers hovering within meters of us.

“You see,” says Herman Redecker with a distinct narrowing of the eyes and a smile that rarely leaves his lips, “I know how these people feel when we are chasing them. I also know what to look for. I, too, have been hunted, and I survived.”

Not so the last group of terrorists who entered northern South West Africa’s farming regions earlier this year. There were two detachments that came across from Ovamboland, one of 15 and another of 22; all but one were accounted for by the South West African security forces within a month.

Their incursions were not without event. On Tyrol, a farm north of Tsumeb, terrorists killed two young children and their grandmother during an early morning attack. Before that, they murdered Karl-Heinz Bucholtz who was inspecting a cattle post. Two blacks in the vehicle with him were left untouched.

Bernd Hennies of Oloegrove Farm which lies east of Otavi was another ambush victim. He was slashed with bayonets. Again, two young Africans on his bakkie were not hurt by the insurgents.





**ABOVE:** Gundel Redecker and son on their farm which recently saw much action when terrorists fled across it; she is sometimes alone for two weeks at a stretch in this desolate region.

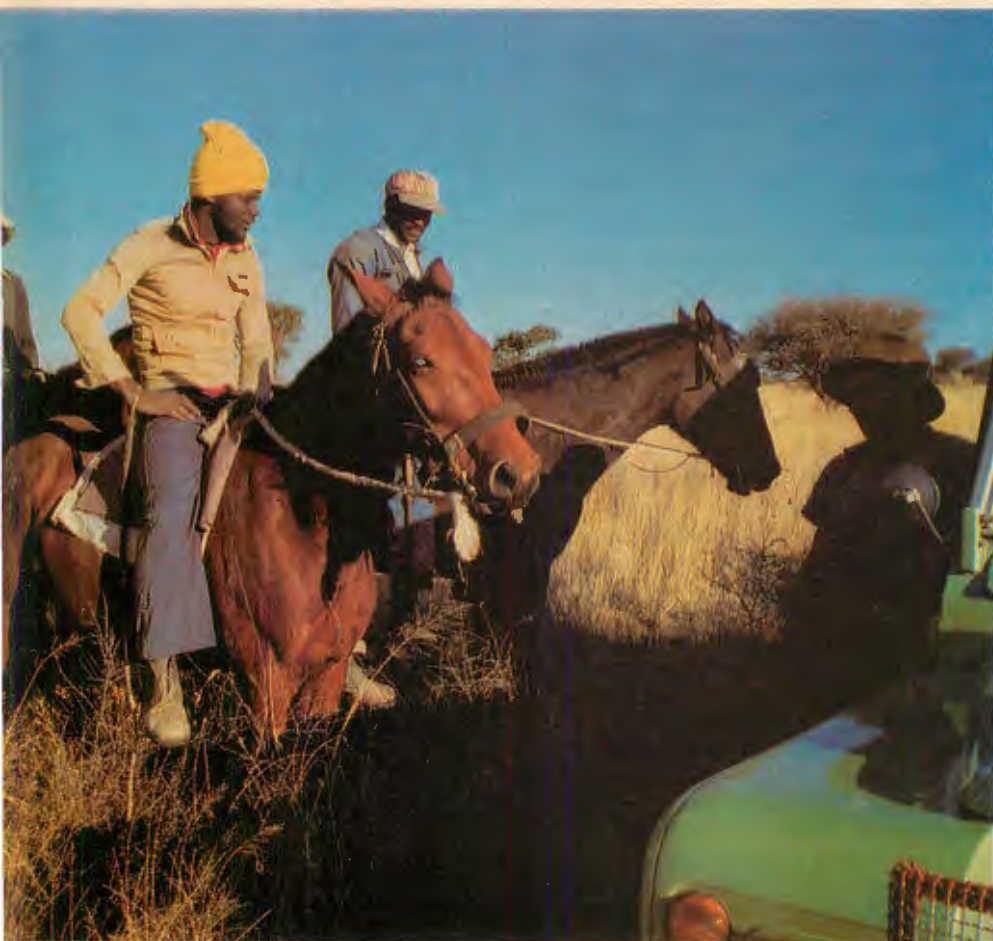
**TOP:** Frau Helm was ordered off her farm by police, "because of the imminent terrorist threat," she told author.



**RIGHT:** Klaus Lichtenburg checks out some riders on his farm; he notes carefully who comes and goes on his property.



Klaus Lichtenberg patrols limits of his farm daily on horseback — “better than vehicles,” he maintains, “in the event of trouble.”



Herr Friedrich, whose farm bordered on Tyrol, was the last victim.

Like many other farmers in the region, Redecker is emphatic that the SWAPO terrorists responsible for the murders were explicit in their actions: “Kill as many whites as possible and leave our black brothers intact.”

“That way,” says this former Pretoria University student, “you foment racial war which leads, ultimately, to the breakdown of authority. The Angolan debacle is one result of such revolution,” he declared. “Now they want to export their chaos here. But we are ready for them.”

Many South West African farmers are not so sure.

Some of them feel they have been abandoned by their administration in Windhoek, that they have been left to cope with any security threat in their respective areas “as best we can.”

That was the way it was described by one prominent South West African farmer, Klaus Lichtenberg of the farm, *Otjisororindi*, which lies about 200 kilometers northeast of Windhoek. He points to a new element of fanaticism that has crept into the otherwise placid South West African way of life, among both whites and blacks. Not only is SWAPO more militant, he maintains, but some South West whites, fearful of a black takeover, have taken matters into their own hands.

Recently, a group of fanatical right wingers hurled a grenade into a gathering of Freemasons in Windhoek. Another group of extremists has formed the South West African Nazi Party, extolling the virtues of Adolf Hitler.

“But these are fanatics. They are part of the lunatic fringe,” says the 53-year-old veteran of World War II, who was badly wounded during the Battle of the Bulge and eventually recuperated in a British hospital before being placed in an Allied POW camp where he learned to speak good English.

“It’s true that the government has done little for the people. This has prompted reaction among individuals. You now have people asking what is wrong with the system and whether it is necessary to do something themselves simply because no one else is going to lift a finger in their interests.”

**“We’re on the firing line.”**

He cited an example: South West Africa is on the firing line of Southern African terrorist movements. Yet, there is no concerted effort to link all the country’s northern farmers with some kind of integrated communications grid under a central command, like the Rhodesians have. “The Army has installed the ‘Marnet’ system on some farms, but not many.

"So you have some farmers connected to a central communications system, but the vast majority are not. The result is that groups of farmers throughout the territory have bought their own communications systems.

"Now you have dozens of groups of farmers, each with their own little networks, communicating regularly with each other in much the same way the Rhodesians use their Agricalert system. Only this one is private and different systems use different frequencies. Some have VHF; others use AM. Marnet has its own frequencies.

"Just think for yourself the communications chaos should South West Africa suddenly find itself in a major war," he stressed in the presence of several other Steinhausen farmers.

Said Rudi Hoffmann, one of the old stalwarts in the area between Outjo and Otjiwarongo: "Three years ago the local military commander in Otjiwarongo promised me all sorts of aid. He came to me personally. There would be communications systems; there would be a government subsidy on security fencing and farmers and their families in outlying areas would be given weapons with which to protect themselves, all in the event of terrorist attack."

Hoffmann is still waiting. Meanwhile, he has used his own money to fence his property and has even built himself a crude armored car, which he believes can be used to counter any possible ambushes. Like the others, he is bitterly disenchanted.

Another disillusioned farmer is widow Frau Helm of *Ahrendsburg* Farm, southwest of Otavi. She left her farm permanently on the advice of the police "because of the terrorist threat," she told me. She, too, had no radio communications, although she has lived alone for several years.

"At least the Rhodesians get some sort of subsidy to fence their homes. We're far wealthier in government terms than they are, yet the Windhoek authorities give us nothing," Hoffmann said at a gathering recently.

### "I love it here but— I may pull up stakes."

One man who has much to lose if hostilities envelop the region, is Heinrich Stegmann, who emigrated to South West Africa from West Germany nine years ago. Every cent he inherited he sank into property in the northern region; under his guidance, his investment has flourished.

During this time he has also learned to love his adopted land. Unlike most, he is characteristically outspoken about problems facing his community.

Speaking a good Afrikaans laced with German, he emphasized: "We don't even get any weapons. In Rhodesia, at least, the women are taught to use automatic

weapons for those periods when their men are away. Here you have to join the local commando to see anything at all." Now Stegmann is looking about him; if he can't make it in South West Africa, he is prepared to pull up stakes and go elsewhere, further accentuating a problem that has already left about 70 percent of the farms in the region unoccupied by whites.

Rural bush telegraph in areas like Otavi, Otjiwarongo, Tsumeb and even Steinhausen further south is excellent. Farmers are in regular communication with one another and they know the state of hostilities, particularly in their own areas. For this reason many were bitter about the way the recent campaign was conducted.

### "We should have learned from Rhodesia."

Stegmann explained: "Suddenly some farmers would wake up to find the army moving through their areas. They were not consulted. They were not even told there was a terrorist presence. Surely they could have learned *something* from the Rhodesians by now.

"Even I could tell them that the best form of countering terrorism in outlying areas is cooperation with the farmers themselves — whether they belong to the Commando or not! Farmers usually know what is going on in their own areas."

Another example cited was the poor security force showing on *Jaegerhof*, Ulrich Weigel's farm.

Weigel had informed the authorities that there were terrorists on his farm. Yet it took security forces four hours to get there, and the terrorists escaped unscathed.

"How can they expect us to have confidence in our security when you look at this dismal picture?" asked Lichtenberg who has resided in Southern Africa for almost a quarter century.

He and others were also critical of the fact that the commando call-up system stretched security in the region even more. "We're barely covering the ground as it is. Why send the men further north when their presence — under the circumstances — is even more vital at home?" he asked.

There were also personal differences to overcome. One farmer recalled a situation which had been allowed to develop in Otjiwarongo; this one affected medical services.

"In that town you have three medical services; the army has its own and it's excellent. Then there are two civilian paramedical units; *Noodhulpliga* and St. Johns. Yet both are in bitter opposition to one another.

"The trouble is that because a German-orientated St. Johns has two ambulances — a grant from a West German organization — and the Afrikaans-controlled *Noodhulpliga* has none, they don't talk to

one another. And this state of affairs existed throughout the recent emergency," the men explained.

Even without a threatening security situation, life in the northern parts of South West Africa is tough.

### "A hard land where only stoics survive."

Military and economic factors have forced the price of ground down to an unrealistic level. Many farmers bought their land for about \$40 a hectare; now it's difficult to sell a farm for \$20 a hectare.

Living, too, is expensive. Transport is often crippling and is reflected in the price one pays for goods. A bag of cement in Otavi costs twice what it does in Windhoek. The same goes for other necessities, a fact which has forced many farmers off the land and into the towns, if only to maintain economic viability.

As one farmer expressed it: "It's not the war that is driving the people off the land, although hostilities have contributed, no doubt.

"This was always a hard land and only the stoics survive. Let's just say that the presence of terrorists is regarded as a last straw by many, especially when the majority felt that the government was doing so little to help in circumstances that would otherwise have generated a national effort.

"If Rhodesia, with so little, can do so much for its citizens, how is it that South West Africa with so much, can do so little for its people?" asked Klaus Lichtenberg, before we parted.



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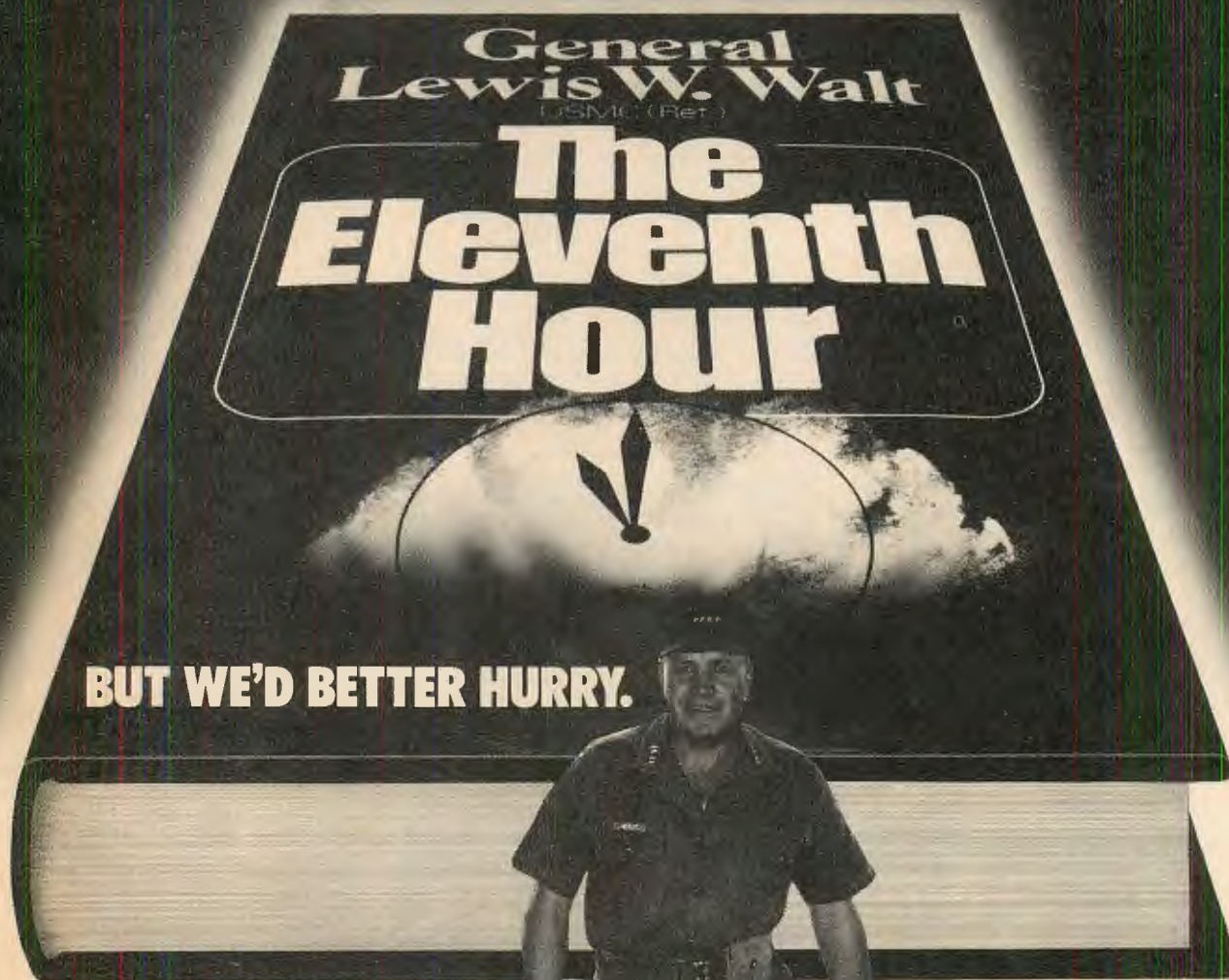
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And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.

Revelation 6:8

